THE·NEW·HUDSON SHAKESPEARE

Charles
Pollard

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M. VVilliam Shake-ſpeare,
HIS
True Chronicle Hiſtory of the life and death of King *Lear*, and his *three Daughters*.

With the vnfortunate life of EDGAR, ſonne and heire to the Earle of *Gloceſter*, and *his ſullen and aſſumed humour of* TOM of Bedlam.

As it was plaid before the Kings Maieſty at White-Hall, vpon S. Stephens night, in Chriſtmas Hollidaies.

By his Maieſties Seruants, playing vſually at the *Globe* on the *Banck-ſide*.

Printed for *Nathaniel Butter*.
1608.

FACSIMILE OF TITLE-PAGE, SECOND QUARTO

THE NEW HUDSON SHAKESPEARE

THE TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
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EDITED AND REVISED BY
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GINN AND COMPANY
BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO LONDON
ATLANTA DALLAS COLUMBUS SAN FRANCISCO

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL

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321.12

The Athenæum Press
GINN AND COMPANY · PROPRIETORS · BOSTON · U.S.A.

PREFACE

The text of this edition of *King Lear* is based upon a collation of the First and the Second Quartos, the seventeenth century Folios, the Globe edition, the Cambridge (W. Aldis Wright) edition of 1891, and that of Delius (1882). As compared with the text of the earlier editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, it is conservative. Exclusive of changes in spelling, punctuation, and stage directions, very few emendations by eighteenth and nineteenth century editors have been adopted; and these, with every variation from the First Folio, are indicated in the textual notes. These notes are printed immediately below the text, so that a reader or student may see at a glance the evidence in the case of a disputed reading, and have some definite understanding of the reasons for those differences in the text of Shakespeare which frequently surprise and very often annoy. Such an arrangement should be of special help in the case of a play universally read and very often acted, as actors and interpreters seldom agree in adhering to one text. A consideration of the more poetical, or the more dramatically effective, of two variant readings will often lead to rich results in awakening a spirit of discriminating interpretation and in developing true creative criticism. In no sense is this a textual variorum edition. The variants given are only those of importance and high authority.

The spelling and the punctuation of the text are modern, except in the case of verb terminations in *-ed*, which, when the *e* is silent, are printed with the apostrophe in its place. This is the general usage in the First Folio. The important contractions in the First Folio which may indicate Elizabethan pronunciation ('i' th'' for 'in the,' for example) are also followed. Modern spelling has to a certain extent been adopted in the text variants, but the original spelling has been retained wherever its peculiarities have been the basis for important textual criticism and emendation.

With the exception of the position of the textual variants, the plan of this edition is similar to that of the earlier editions of the Hudson Shakespeare. It is impossible to specify the various instances of revision and rearrangement in the matter of the Introduction and the interpretative notes, but the endeavor has been to retain all that gave the Hudson Shakespeare its unique place and to add the results of what seems vital and permanent in later inquiry and research. In this edition, as in the volumes of the series already published, the sections entitled Sources, Date of Composition, Early Editions, Versification and Diction, Scene of Action, Duration of Action, Dramatic Construction and Development, with Analysis by Act and Scene, and Stage History, are wholly new. In this edition, too, is introduced a chronological chart, covering the important events of Shakespeare's life as man and as author, and indicating in parallel columns his relation to contemporary writers and events. As a guide to reading clubs and literary societies, there has been appended to the Introduction a table of the distribution of characters in the play, giving the acts and scenes in which each character appears, and the number of lines spoken by each. The index of words and phrases

has been so arranged as to serve both as a glossary and as a guide to the more important grammatical differences between Elizabethan and modern English.

While it is important that the principle of *suum cuique* be attended to so far as is possible in matters of research and scholarship, it is becoming more and more difficult to give every man his own in Shakespearian annotation. The amount of material accumulated is so great that the identity-origin of much important comment and suggestion is either wholly lost or so crushed out of shape as to be beyond recognition. Instructive significance perhaps attaches to this in editing the works of one who quietly made so much of materials gathered by others. But the list of authorities given on page xci will indicate the chief source of much that has gone to enrich the value of this edition. Especial acknowledgment is here made of the obligations to Dr. William Aldis Wright and Dr. Horace Howard Furness, whose work in the collation of Quartos, Folios, and the more important English and American editions of Shakespeare has been of so great value to all subsequent editors and investigators.

With regard to the general plan of this revision of Hudson's Shakespeare, Professor W. P. Trent, of Columbia University, has offered valuable suggestions and given important advice.

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INTRODUCTION

NOTE. In citations from Shakespeare's plays and nondramatic poems the numbering has reference to the Globe edition, except in the case of this play, where the reference is to this edition.

I. SOURCES

The ultimate origin of the Lear story as developed by Shakespeare may well be a nature myth.[1] The accompaniment of wind and rain and thunderblast gives cosmic significance to the elemental tragedy of a broken home. The outraged passion of filial affection, the clash between parent and children, and what Keats calls in this very connection[2] "the fierce dispute betwixt hell torment and impassioned clay" are symbolized in the "dreadful pudder"[3] of the elements which marks Shakespeare's treatment of an immemorial tale. The story-theme of a parent testing the love of his children and disinheriting the youngest, who in the end proves to be the worthiest, has with infinite variations and modifications a place in the folklore of all ages and countries.

[1] "According to some Celtic folk-lorists, 'Lir' = Neptune; the two cruel daughters = the rough Winds; Cordelia = the gentle Zephyr. I know no better commentary on the tempestuous character of the play; Shakespeare has unconsciously divined the germ of the myth." — Gollancz.

[2] *Sonnet written before re-reading 'King Lear.'*

[3] III, ii, 45. See textual variants. "It is to me a sufficient reason for preferring 'pudder' to *pother*, that Charles Lamb preferred it; in his remarks on this play it is the word he uses." —Furness.

It is the basis of more than one Bible story; it is the germ of the Œdipodean cycle; a still popular variant is the nursery tale of Cinderella.

The Name 'Lear'[1]

The Lear version of the story as given in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britonum* (see below) is undoubtedly Celtic, and philology suggests an Irish rather than a Welsh origin. In a comment on Geoffrey's words,[2] "Leir [the son of Bladud] . . . built, upon the river Sore, a city called in the British tongue Kaerleir, in the Saxon, Leircestre," Professor Sir John Rhys says: "As to the 'Leir' of Geoffrey . . . that name looks as if given its form on the strength of the *legr* of Legraceaster, the Anglo-Saxon name for the town of Leicester. . . . Professor Stevenson, however, with much plausibility, regards Legra as an old name of the river Soar, and as surviving in that of the village of Leire, spelled 'Legre' in the *Doomsday Book*."[3] After giving this quotation, W. J. Craig[4] says, on the authority of Professor Rhys, that "the translation of *The Red Book of Jesus College* calls 'Leir' always 'Llyr,' which is the Welsh for the Irish *Lir* in such names as Mannannan Mac Lir, but that this Llyr is nearly quite unconnected with Welsh literature, and is mixed up with the

[1] This spelling is found for the first time in *The Stationers' Registers*, 1607, in the announcement of the publication of Shakespeare's play. The Quartos and Folios spell the name in this way throughout. 'Leir,' 'Leyr,' and 'Leyre' are the common pre-Shakespearian forms.

[2] Here given in Thompson's translation (revised by Giles), *Six Old English Chronicles*, London, 1842.

[3] *Celtic Folk-Lore*, Clarendon Press, 1901, page 547.

[4] *King Lear*, Introduction, xxxv–xxxvi, Methuen and Company.

Lludd Llawereint, the Welsh equivalent of the Irish king, Nuada Arget Lamh, that is, Lludd or Nuada of the Silver Hand." Craig also adds: "Professor Rhys has no doubt that the name of the daughter of this Lludd, the Creurdilad of *The Black Book of Carmarthen*, and Creeidylat in the Kuhlwch and Olwen story, is the basis (at several removes, perhaps) of the name 'Cordelia' in Shakespeare's *King Lear*."

The Lear Plot

1. *From Geoffrey of Monmouth to Richard Grafton.* The oldest extant version of the Lear story is in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin *Historia Britonum*, the famous quarry from which chroniclers and poets from Gaimar to Milton drew material and inspiration. There the Lear story immediately precedes that of Gorbodugo and his sons, which Sackville and Norton developed into *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*, the first regular tragedy in the English language, acted before Queen Elizabeth, January 18, 1561 (1562), and printed for the first time when Shakespeare was a year old. The Gorboduc story is a variant of that of Lear. Gorboduc divides his kingdom between his sons, as Lear does his between his daughters, with disastrous results.

Geoffrey's *Historia*, which professed to be a translation of "a very old book in the British tongue," was in circulation in the middle of the twelfth century, and his version of the story was current until the close of the sixteenth century, being transmitted through Wace's French *Roman de Brut* (1155) and Layamon's *Brut* (about 1205), where the story appeared for the first time in English, to the metrical chronicles of Robert of Gloucester (1298), Robert Mannyng (1303), John Hardyng (1436), and the prose histories of Robert Fabyan (died 1513),

John Rastell (*The Pastyme of People*, 1529), and Richard Grafton (*Chronicle . . . of the Affayres of England*, 1568).

In the *Gesta Romanorum*, a popular collection of stories in Latin, compiled about the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth, two different versions of the story appeared, one of them having the Emperor Theodosius as its hero. An English translation of the *Gesta* was printed by Wynkyn de Worde about 1510–1515, containing the version of the story of the Three Caskets most similar to that in *The Merchant of Venice*.

The chief variation in these earlier narratives is in Lear's reasons for questioning his daughters prior to the partition of the kingdom, a variation to be accounted for by the motive of the love-test and the threefold division being a common theme of folklore. Geoffrey says (Thompson-Giles translation): "When he began to grow old, he had thoughts of dividing his kingdom among them, and of bestowing on them such husbands as were fit to be advanced to the government with them. But to make trial who was worthy of the best part of his kingdom, he went to each of them to ask which of them loved him most." In the English version of the *Gesta* the reason given is that he wished to "marie his dovghters or he deyde, but first he would wete (i.e. 'know'), which lovede hym moste, shulde be best mariede."

2. *Holinshed's Chronicles*. While Shakespeare may have learned the outlines of the Lear story from many sources, — tradition, or the works in prose and verse just mentioned, — it is certain that he was familiar with the version given in his favorite source book of British history, the *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, by Raphael Holinshed (Holynshed, Hollynshed, Hollingshead, etc.), first published in two

folio volumes in 1577. A second edition appeared in 1587, "newlie augmented and continued." In this second edition are many interesting changes in the text, and the fact that Shakespeare adopts some of these in his historical plays, strengthens the conclusion that this was the edition used by him.[1] The following extracts are from *The second Booke of the historie of England*, chapters v and vi:

Leir the sonne of Baldud was admitted ruler ouer the Britaines in the yeare of the world 3105, at what time Joas reigned in Juda. This Leir was a prince of right noble demeanor, gouerning his land and subiects in great wealth. He made the towne of Caerleir now called Leicester, which standeth vpon the riuer of Sore. It is written that he had by his wife three daughters without other issue, whose names were Gonorilla, Regan, and Cordeilla, which daughters he greatly loued, but specially Cordeilla the yoongest farre aboue the two elder. When this Leir therefore was come to great yeres, and began to waxe vnweldie through age, he thought to vnderstand the affections of his daughters towards him, and preferre hir whome he best loued, to the succession ouer the kingdome. Whervpon he first asked Gonorilla the eldest, how well she loued him: who calling hir gods to record, protested that she loued him more than hir owne life, which by right and reason should be most deere vnto hir. With which answer the father being well pleased, turned to the second, and demanded of hir how well she loued him: who answered (confirming hir saiengs with great othes) that she loued him more than toong could expresse, and farre aboue all other creatures of the world.

Then called he his yoongest daughter Cordeilla before him, and asked of hir what account she made of him, vnto whome she made this answer as followeth: "Knowing the great loue and fatherlie zeale that you haue alwaies borne towards me (for the which I maie not answere you otherwise than I thinke, and as my conscience

[1] In W. G. Boswell-Stone's *Shakspere's Holinshed, The Chronicle and the Historical Plays Compared*, are given the portions of the *Chronicles* which are of special interest to the Shakespeare student.

leadeth me) I protest vnto you, that I haue loued you euer, and will continuallie (while I liue) loue you as my naturall father. And if you would more vnderstand of the loue that I beare you, assertaine your selfe, that so much as you haue, so much you are worth, and so much I loue you, and no more." The father being nothing content with this answer, married his two eldest daughters, the one vnto Henninus the duke of Cornewall, and the other vnto Maglanus the duke of Albania, betwixt whome he willed and ordeined that his land should be deuided after his death, and the one halfe thereof immediatelie should be assigned to them in hand: but for the third daughter Cordeilla he reserued nothing.

Nevertheless it fortuned that one of the princes of Gallia (which now is called France) whose name was Aganippus, hearing of the beautie, womanhood, and good conditions of the said Cordeilla, desired to haue hir in mariage, and sent ouer to hir father, requiring that he might haue hir to wife: to whome answer was made, that he might haue his daughter, but as for anie dower he could haue none, for all was promised and assured to hir other sisters already. Aganippus notwithstanding this answer of deniall to receiue anie thing by way of dower with Cordeilla, tooke hir to wife, onlie moued thereto (I saie) for respect of hir person and amiable vertues. This Aganippus was one of the twelue kings that ruled Gallia in those daies, as in the British historie it is recorded. But to proceed.

After that Leir was fallen into age, the two dukes that had married his two eldest daughters, thinking it long yer the gouernment of the land did come to their hands, arose against him in armour, and reft from him the gouernance of the land, vpon conditions to be continued for terme of life: by the which he was put to his portion, that is, to liue after a rate assigned to him for the maintenance of his estate, which in processe of time was diminished as well by Maglanus as by Henninus. But the greatest griefe that Leir tooke, was to see the vnkindnesse of his daughters, which seemed to thinke that all was too much which their father had, the same being neuer so little: in so muche that going from the one to the other, he was brought to that miserie, that scarslie they would allow him one seruant to wait vpon him.

In the end, such was the vnkindnesse, or (as I maie saie) the vnnaturalnesse which he found in his two daughters, notwithstanding

their faire and pleasant words vttered in time past, that being constreined of necessitie, he fled the land, & sailed into Gallia, there to seeke some comfort of his yongest daughter Cordeilla, whom before time he hated. The ladie Cordeilla hearing that he was arriued in poore estate, she first sent to him priuilie a certeine summe of monie to apparell himselfe withall, and to reteine a certeine number of seruants that might attend vpon him in honorable wise, as apperteined to the estate which he had borne : and then so accompanied, she appointed him to come to the court, which he did, and was so ioifullie, honorablie, and louinglie receiued, both by his sonne in law Aganippus, and also by his daughter Cordeilla, that his hart was greatlie comforted : for he was no lesse honored, than if he had beene king of the whole countrie himselfe.

Now when he had informed his sonne in law and his daughter in what sort he had beene vsed by his other daughters, Aganippus caused a mightie armie to be put in a readinesse, and likewise a great nauie of ships to be rigged, to passe ouer into Britaine with Leir his father in law, to see him againe restored to his kingdome. It was accorded, that Cordeilla should also go with him to take possession of the land, the which he promised to leaue vnto hir, as the rightfull inheritour after his decesse, notwithstanding any former grant made to hir sisters or to their husbands in anie maner of wise.

Herevpon, when this armie and nauie of ships were readie, Leir and his daughter Cordeilla with hir husband tooke the sea, and arriuing in Britaine, fought with their enimies, and discomfited them in battell, in the which Maglanus and Henninus were slaine : and then was Leir restored to his kingdome, which he ruled after this by the space of two yeeres, and then died, fortie yeeres after he first began to reigne. His bodie was buried at Leicester in a vaut vnder the chanell of the riuer of Sore beneath the towne.... Cordeilla the yoongest daughter of Leir was admitted Q. and supreme gouernesse of Britaine in the yeere of the world 3155, before the bylding of Rome 54; Uzia was then reigning in Juda, and Jeroboam ouer Israell. This Cordeilla after hir fathers deceasse ruled the land of Britaine right worthilie during the space of fiue yeeres, in which meane time hir husband died, and then about the end of those fiue yeeres, hir two nephews Margan and Cunedag, sonnes to hir aforesaid sisters, disdaining to be vnder the gouernment of a woman, leuied warre against hir, and destroied a great part of

the land, and finallie tooke hir prisoner, and laid hir fast in ward, wherewith she tooke suche griefe, being a woman of a manlie courage, and despairing to recouer libertie, there she slue hirselfe.

In Holinshed's *Chronicles*, as in the earlier narratives, no supreme catastrophe overwhelms the old king; he has no great rage deepening into madness[1]; there is no mention of Gloucester and his sons, of Kent's banishment and disguise, or of the Fool. Only in the simple statement that Cordelia slew herself is suggested the unutterable pathos of what Wordsworth would have called an old unhappy far-off thing.

3. *The Faerie Queene.* John Higgins (Higins) in a contribution to the famous Elizabethan miscellany, *A Mirror for Magistrates*, where he makes 'Queen Cordila' or 'Cordell' tell her own strange history, and William Warner in *Albion's England* (1586), had shown in popular verse the imaginative appeal and emotional possibilities of the Lear story, but Spenser was the first to give it a place in immortal English poetry. The first three books of *The Faerie Queene* were published in 1590, and in six stanzas, II, x, 27–32, is epitomized as much of the old story as Shakespeare used. In connection with Lear's questions to his daughters, Spenser for the first time in the development of the story suggests the reason, afterwards adopted by Shakespeare, that he did so merely to have his ears tickled by their protestations of affection.[2] In *The Faerie Queene*, too, hanging is given for the first time as the mode of Cordelia's death. Above all, Spenser gave Shakespeare and the world 'Cordelia' as the name of

[1] In the ballad of *King Leir and his Three Daughters*, included by Percy in his *Reliques*, the old king "grew frantick mad," but the ballad is undoubtedly posterior to Shakespeare's play and probably founded upon it.

[2] Cf. notes, I, i, 5–6, 19. See also note, I, iv, 204, for obvious indebtedness to Spenser.

the loving daughter. She is mentioned by name thrice. The first time she is called 'Cordeill'; then the exigencies of rhyme and rhythm help to create the immortal form 'Cordelia.' Among the older forms of the name are 'Cordell,' 'Cordella,' 'Cordeilla,' 'Cordoylle' (or 'Gordoylle').

4. *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters.* The dramatic possibilities of the Lear story attracted the attention of Elizabethan playwrights long before Shakespeare wrote his play on the subject. An entry in Henslowe's *Diary* shows that a *kynge leare* was performed on April 6, 1593 (1594), and the indication is that it was not a new play. This is probably the "booke" entered to Edward White in *The Stationers' Registers* in 1594 as *The moste famous Chronicle historye of* LEIR *kinge of England and his Three Daughters.* No copy of this is extant; it may never have been printed; but eleven years later, on May 8, 1605, to Simon Stafford was entered in *The Stationers' Registers* what in all probability is the same play, "A booke called '*the Tragecall historie of kinge* LEIR *and his Three Daughiers &c.*' As it was latelie Acted." In the course of that year the book was published with the following title-page:

The
True Chronicle Hi-
story of King LEIR, and his three
daughters, Gonorill, Ragan,
and Cordella.
As it hath bene diuers and sundry
times lately acted.
LONDON,
printed by Simon Stafford for John
Wright, and are to bee sold at his shop at
Christes Church dore, next Newgate-
Market, 1605

This anonymous play arranges the main incidents of the Lear story with a view to dramatic effectiveness, but the influence of the old stage chronicle histories makes itself felt throughout; the diction is conventional, with rhyming couplets everywhere; and it closes with the restoration of the king to all his old titles and possessions. Though it ends happily, there is enough serious matter in the story of the division of the kingdom and the disinheritance of the youngest daughter to justify the word "Tragecall" applied to it in *The Stationers' Registers*, without reading into the epithet a printer's duplicity (see below, Date of Composition). Whether or not this is the play referred to by Henslowe and registered in 1594,[1] it is obvious that Shakespeare was acquainted with it and to a certain extent indebted to it. This indebtedness extends both to plot and to individual phrases and expressions. In plot may be mentioned Lear's total abdication of his kingdom,[2] his being attended through his misfortunes by a faithful adherent (called Perillus in the older play) who pleads with Lear on behalf of Cordelia and adopts a disguise, the presence of a messenger who carries letters between Goneril

[1] Halliwell-Phillipps reasons that the Henslowe play and that registered in 1594 are identical; that this play is lost; and that the lost play was more like Shakespeare's than that printed in 1605. He bases much on the mention of "Kentes woden leage" in an inventory of a theatrical wardrobe belonging to the Lord Admiral's company, 1598–1599. He takes this to refer to the stocks where the Kent of *King Lear* was confined.

[2] "In one of his snatches of song Shakespeare's Fool speaks of 'That lord that counsell'd thee to give away thy land' (I, iv, 130–131). There is nothing in the rest of the play to explain the allusion; but we find that in the old play the love-test is proposed by a courtier, Skalliger by name, and that Lear at once resigns his whole kingdom." — D. Nichol Smith.

and Regan, Goneril's fault-finding with her father, and the pathetic recognition-reconciliation scene between Lear and Cordelia where the father kneels before the daughter until she bids him rise. In the crisis of the older play an assassin who is about to murder the king and his faithful adherent is startled from his purpose by a clap of thunder, — the first time that thunder is mentioned in connection with a story which will now have it as an accompaniment to the name of Lear while language lasts. Some of the verbal resemblances between the two plays are interesting. Perillus bewailing the old king's fate calls him "the myrour of mild patience," an expression which recalls "the pattern of all patience" in III, ii, 33. Goneril's unborn child is referred to as "young bones" in both plays, and in each we have a pointed reference to the old belief that the pelican feeds its young with its own blood.

The Gloucester Plot

In *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* there is not the slightest suggestion of the great subplot of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, — the story of Gloucester and his sons, the inweaving of which with the main plot gives such sweep and tragic intensity to the conception. As was first pointed out by Capell, Shakespeare was indebted for the outline of this story, almost parallel in theme to that of Lear and his daughters, to the following passage in the tenth chapter of the second book of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, first published in 1590:

> *The pitifull state, and storie of the Paphlagonian vnkinde King, and his kind sonne, first related by the son, then by the blind father.*
>
> It was in the kingdome of *Galacia*, the season being (as in the depth of winter) very cold, and as then sodainely growne to so extreame and foule a storme, that neuer any winter (I thinke) brought

foorth a fowler child: so that the Princes were euen compelled by the haile, that the pride of the winde blew into their faces, to seeke some shrowding place within a certaine hollow rocke offering it vnto them, they made it their shield against the tempests furie. And so staying there, till the violence thereof was passed, they heard the speach of a couple, who not perceiuing them (being hidde within that rude canapy) helde a straunge and pitifull disputation which made them steppe out; yet in such sort, as they might see vnseene. There they perceaued an aged man, and a young, scarcely come to the age of a man, both poorely arayed, extreamely weather-beaten; the olde man blinde, the young man leading him: and yet through all those miseries, in both these seemed to appeare a kind of noblenesse, not sutable to that affliction. But the first words they heard, were these of the old man. Well *Leonatus* (said he) since I cannot perswade thee to lead me to that which should end my griefe, & thy trouble, let me now entreat thee to leaue me: feare not, my miserie cannot be greater then it is, & nothing doth become me but miserie; feare not the danger of my blind steps, I cannot fall worse then I am. And doo not I pray thee, doo not obstinately continue to infect thee with my wretchednes. But flie, flie from this region, onely worthy of me. Deare father (answered he) doo not take away from me the onely remnant of my happinesse: while I haue power to doo you seruice, I am not wholly miserable. Ah my sonne (said he, and with that he groned, as if sorrow straue to breake his hearte) how euill fits it me to haue such a sonne, and how much doth thy kindnesse vpbraide my wickednesse? These dolefull speeches, and some others to like purpose (well shewing they had not bene borne to the fortune they were in,) moued the Princes to goe out vnto them, and aske the younger what they were? Sirs (answered he, with a good grace, and made the more agreable by a certaine noble kinde of pitiousnes) I see well you are straungers, that know not our miserie so well here knowne, that no man dare know, but that we must be miserable. In deede our state is such, as though nothing is so needfull vnto vs as pittie, yet nothing is more daungerous vnto vs, then to make our selues so knowne as may stirre pittie. But your presence promiseth, that cruelty shall not ouer-runne hate. And if it did, in truth our state is soncke below the degree of feare.

This old man (whom I leade) was lately rightfull Prince of this countrie of *Paphlagonia*, by the hard-hearted vngratefulnes of a sonne of his, depriued, not onely of his kingdome (wherof no forraine forces were euer able to spoyle him) but of his sight, the riches which Nature graunts to the poorest creatures. Whereby, & by other his vnnaturall dealings, he hath bin driuen to such griefe, as euen now he would haue had me to haue led him to the toppe of this rocke, thence to cast himselfe headlong to death : and so would haue made me (who receiued my life of him) to be the worker of his destruction. But noble Gentlemen (said he) if either of you haue a father, and feele what duetifull affection is engraffed in a sonnes hart, let me intreate you to conuey this afflicted Prince to some place of rest & securitie. Amongst your worthie actes it shall be none of the least, that a King, of such might and fame, and so vniustly oppressed, is in any sort by you relieued.

But before they could make him answere, his father began to speake. Ah my sonne (said he) how euill an Historian are you, that leaue out the chiefe knotte of all the discourse? my wickednes, my wickednes. And if thou doest it to spare my eares, (the onely sense nowe left me proper for knowledge) assure thy selfe thou dost mistake me. And I take witnesse of that Sunne which you see (with that he cast vp his blinde eyes, as if he would hunt for light,) and wish my selfe in worse case then I do wish my selfe, which is as euill as may be, if I speake vntruly; that nothing is so welcome to my thoughts, as the publishing of my shame. Therefore know you Gentlemen (to whom from my harte I wish that it may not proue ominous foretoken of misfortune to haue mette with such a miser as I am) that whatsoeuer my sonne (ô God, that trueth binds me to reproch him with the name of my sonne) hath said, is true. But besides those truthes, this also is true, that hauing had in lawful mariage, of a mother fitte to beare royall children, this sonne (such one as partly you see, and better shall knowe by my shorte declaration) and so enioyed the expectations in the world of him, till he was growen to iustifie their expectations (so as I needed enuie no father for the chiefe comfort of mortalitie, to leaue an other ones-selfe after me) I was caried by a bastarde sonne of mine (if at least I be bounde to beleeue the words of that base woman my concubine, his mother)

first to mislike, then to hate, lastly to destroy, to doo my best to destroy, this sonne (I thinke you thinke) vndeseruing destruction. What waies he vsed to bring me to it, if I should tell you, I should tediously trouble you with as much poysonous hypocrisie, desperate fraude, smoothe malice, hidden ambition, & smiling enuie, as in anie liuing person could be harbored. But I list it not, no remembrance, (no, of naughtines) delights me, but mine own; & me thinks, the accusing his traines might in some manner excuse my fault, which certainly I loth to doo. But the conclusion is, that I gaue order to some seruants of mine, whom I thought as apte for such charities as my selfe, to leade him out into a forrest, & there to kill him.

But those theeues (better natured to my sonne then my selfe) spared his life, letting him goe, to learne to liue poorely: which he did, giuing himselfe to be a priuate souldier, in a countrie here by. But as he was redy to be greatly aduanced for some noble peeces of seruice which he did, he hearde newes of me: who (dronke in my affection to that vnlawfull and vnnaturall sonne of mine) suffered my self so to be gouerned by him, that all fauours and punishments passed by him, all offices, and places of importance, distributed to his fauorites; so that ere I was aware, I had left my self nothing but the name of a King: which he shortly wearie of too, with many indignities (if any thing may be called an indignity, which was laid vpon me) threw me out of my seat, and put out my eies; and then (proud in his tyrannie) let me goe, nether imprisoning, nor killing me: but rather delighting to make me feele my miserie; miserie indeed, if euer there were any; full of wretchednes, fuller of disgrace, and fullest of guiltines. And as he came to the crowne by so vniust meanes, as vniustlie he kept it, by force of stranger souldiers in *Cittadels*, the nestes of tyranny, & murderers of libertie; disarming all his own countrimen, that no man durst shew himself a wel-willer of mine: to say the trueth (I think) few of them being so (considering my cruell follie to my good sonne, and foolish kindnes to my vnkinde bastard:) but if there were any who fell to pitie of so great a fall, and had yet any sparkes of vnstained duety lefte in them towardes me, yet durst they not shewe it, scarcely with giuing me almes at their doores; which yet was the onelie sustenance of my distressed life, no bodie daring to shewe so much charitie, as to lende

me a hande to guide my darke steppes: Till this sonne of mine (God knowes, woorthie of a more vertuous, and more fortunate father) forgetting my abhominable wrongs, not recking daunger, & neglecting the present good way he was in doing himselfe good, came hether to doo this kind office you see him performe towards me, to my vnspeakable griefe; not onely because his kindnes is a glasse euen to my blind eyes, of my naughtines, but that aboue all griefes, it greeues me he should desperatly aduenture the losse of his soul-deseruing life for mine, that yet owe more to Fortune for my deserts, as if he would cary mudde in a chest of Chrystall. For well I know, he that now raigneth, how much soeuer (and with good reason) he despiseth me, of all men despised; yet he will not let slippe any aduantage to make away him, whose iust title (ennobled by courage and goodnes) may one day shake the seate of a neuer secure tyrannie. And for this cause I craued of him to leade me to the toppe of this rocke, indeede I must confesse, with meaning to free him from so serpentine a companion as I am. But he finding what I purposed, onely therein since he was borne, shewed himselfe disobedient vnto me. And now Gentlemen, you haue the true storie, which I pray you publish to the world, that my mischieuous proceedings may be the glorie of his filiall pietie, the onely reward now left for so great a merite. And if it may be, let me obtaine that of you, which my sonne denies me: for neuer was there more pity in sauing any, then in ending me; both because therein my agonies shall ende, and so shall you preserue this excellent young man, who els wilfully folowes his owne ruine.

If this passage from the *Arcadia* be compared with the Gloucester story in *King Lear*, an instructive object lesson may be read in Shakespeare's treatment of source material. In the interests of dramatic effectiveness and economy he selects, he rearranges, he condenses; or, in the subordination of incident and narrative to characterization, he expands and develops with infinite fertility of invention and art. Everywhere may be felt the creative touch which, to use his own pregnant words, "made old offences of affections new."

Cordelia's Speech, I, i, 88–97

What has been regarded as the harsh and unnatural note in Cordelia's reply to her father, I, i, 88–97, is suggested rather than expressed by Geoffrey of Monmouth and the earlier chroniclers[1] down to Holinshed. It has no place in *The Faerie Queene*, and in *The True Chronicle History* the words of Cordelia to her father are always exquisitely tender. The only Elizabethan version in which the harsh note is sounded is Higgins's contribution to *A Mirror for Magistrates*, where 'Queen Cordila' is made to say:

> But not content with this, hee asked mee likewise
> If I did not him loue and honour well.
> No cause (quoth I) there is I should your grace despise:
> For nature so doth binde and duty mee compell
> To loue you, as I ought my father, well.
> Yet shortely I may chaunce, if Fortune will,
> To finde in heart to beare another more good will.
>
> Thus much I sayd of nuptiall loues that ment,
> Not minding once of hatred vile or ire,
> And partly taxing them, for which intent
> They set my fathers heart on wrathfull fire.
> "Shee neuer shall to any part aspire
> Of this my realme (quoth hee) among'st you twayne:
> But shall without all dowry aie remaine."

Both Percy and Malone have pointed out that the spirit of Cordelia's speech was not improbably suggested to Shakespeare by a passage in the "Wise Speeches," appended to

[1] "Wace assigns a peculiarly French motive for Cordeilla's caustic reply; she speaks in jest to expose the flattery of her sisters' speeches." — Craig.

Camden's *Remains concerning Britain*, published in 1605, where the following interesting variant of the Lear story is told concerning Ina, king of the West Saxons:

> Ina . . . had three daughters, of whom upon a time he demanded whether they did love him. . . . The youngest, but the wisest, told her father flatly, without flattery, that albeit she did love, honour, and reverence him . . . yet she did think one day it would come to pass that she would affect another more fervently, meaning her husband, when she were married.

Lear's Retinue, I, i, 126

In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britonum*, Lear, after he is deprived of his kingdom, is allowed a retinue of sixty soldiers. The number is cut down by Gonorilla (Goneril) to thirty; in the house of Regau (Regan) to five; and at last Lear is left with only one attendant. The succeeding chroniclers tend to lessen the number of the retinue; Holinshed omits all reference to it. The only Elizabethan writer who revives the retinue incident, so important in the first scene of Shakespeare's play, is Higgins. In his contribution to *A Mirror for Magistrates* he not only gives the original number of retainers as sixty but describes vividly the cutting down of the "trayne." This, as well as the passage quoted above, and such expressions as "doting foole," etc., in what follows, have led many investigators to give *A Mirror for Magistrates* an important place in the sources of Shakespeare's play[1]:

> But while that I these ioyes so well enioy'd in *Fraunce*,
> My father *Leire* in *Britayne* waxt unweldy old.
> Whereon his daughters more themselues aloft t'aduance

[1] Malone points out that *A Mirror for Magistrates* contains material used in *Coriolanus*.

Desir'd the Realme to rule it as they wolde.
Their former loue and friendship waxed cold,
Their husbands rebels voyde of reason quite
Rose vp, rebeld, bereft his crowne and right:

Caus'd him agree they might in parts equall
Deuide the Realme, and promist him a gard
Of sixty Knights on him attending still at call.
But in six monthes such was his hap to hard,
That *Gonerell* of his retinue barde
The halfe of them, shee and her husband reft,
And scarce alow'd the other halfe they left.

Eke as in *Albany* lay hee lamenting fates,
When as my sister so sought all his vtter spoyle:
The meaner vpstart courtiers thought themselues his mates,
His daughter him disdayn'd and forced not his foyle.
Then was hee fayne for succoure his to toyle
With halfe his trayne to *Cornwall*, there to lie
In greatest neede, his *Ragans* loue to try.

So when hee came to *Cornwall*, shee with ioy
Receiued him, and Prince *Maglaurus* did the like.
There hee abode a yeare, and liu'd without anoy:
But then they tooke all his retinue from him quite
Saue only ten, and shew'd him daily spite:
Which he bewayl'd complayning durst not striue,
Though in disdayne they last alow'd but fiue.

What more despite could deuelish beasts deuise,
Then ioy their fathers woefull days to see?
What vipers vile could so their King despise,
Or so vnkinde, so curst, so cruell bee?
From thence agayn hee went to *Albany*,
Where they bereau'd his seruants all saue one,
Bad him content him selfe with that, or none.

Eke at what time hee ask'd of them to haue his gard,
To gard his noble grace where so hee went:
They cal'd him doting foole, all his requests debard,
Demaunding if with life hee were not well content:
Then hee to late his rigour did repent
Gaynst mee, my sisters' fawning loue that knew,
Found flattery false, that seem'd so faire in vew.

Names of Demons and Spirits, etc.

Shakespeare's indebtedness to the literature of controversy is less obvious than his obligations to history and high romance, but he has taken material from two noteworthy Elizabethan controversialists, Reginald Scot and Samuel Harsnet (Harsnett).[1] Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* furnished *Macbeth*, and to a less degree *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with allusions and supernatural lore; from Harsnet's once famous *A Declaration of egregious . . . Impostures*, etc., come the names of the devils and spirits mentioned by Edgar when feigning madness (see notes, III, iv, 105, 128, 131; III, vi, 44; IV, i, 59–61, etc.), and much other matter in *King Lear*.

In addition to the quotations from Harsnet in the notes to the text, mention may be made of what Bishop Percy regarded as unquestionably a Harsnet source for Lear's words in II, iv, 52–53. In the *Declaration* a Richard Maynie depones: "The disease I spake of was a spice of the *Mother*. . . . It riseth . . . and proceeding with a great swelling, causeth a very painful collicke in the stomach, and an extraordinary giddines in the head." Harsnet's comment is: "Maynie had a spice of the *Hysterica passio*, as seems, from his youth, he himselfe termes it the *Moother*." Theobald and Malone also

[1] Modern books of reference favor the spelling 'Harsnett'; the prevailing Elizabethan and seventeenth century form is 'Harsnet.'

draw attention to the following passage from the *Declaration* as furnishing the suggestion for Edgar's words, "that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew," III, iv, 52–53: "One Alexander an apothecarie . . . having brought with him . . . a new halter, and two blades of knives, did leave the same upon the gallerie floare. . . . It was reported, that the devil layd them in the Gallery, that some of those who were possessed, might either hang themselves with the halter, or kil themselves with the blades."

So unmistakable is Shakespeare's indebtedness to Harsnet that, in determining the date of composition of *King Lear*, the earlier time limit is universally fixed by the publication of the *Declaration*. Harsnet's work was entered in *The Stationers' Registers* under the date March 16, 1603, and published within the year. In his *New Illustrations of Shakespeare*, Hunter detected interesting links between *Twelfth Night* and another of Harsnet's controversial writings, *Discovery of the fraudulent practices of John Darrel*, etc., published in 1599.

II. DATE OF COMPOSITION

The date of composition of *King Lear* falls within December 26, 1606, the later time limit (*terminus ante quem*), fixed by the entry in *The Stationers' Registers* given below, and 1603, the earlier time limit (*terminus post quem*), fixed by the publication of Harsnet's *Declaration*. The weight of evidence is in favor of 1605–1606.

External Evidence

The Stationers' Registers. The only certain piece of external evidence for the date of composition is the following entry

in *The Stationers' Registers*[1] under the year 1607, two years and a half after the date of the entry of *King Leir:*

26 Novembris

Nathaniel Butter
John Busby

Entred for their copie vnder th andes of Sir GEORGE BUCK knight and Th wardens A booke called. Master WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *his 'historye of Kinge LEAR' as yt was played* before the kinges maiestie at Whitehall vpon Sainct Stephens night at Christmas Last by his maiesties servantes playinge vsually at the 'Globe' on the Banksyde. vj[d]

This entry of what was published in quarto the following year makes clear that Shakespeare's play was written before December 26 (St. Stephen's Day), 1606. In the endeavor to get a more exact date, investigators have developed a theory first suggested by Malone in 1790, that the 1605 edition of the pre-Shakespearian play, entered in *The Stationers' Registers* on May 8th of that year (see above, Sources), was issued to take advantage of the popular interest excited by Shakespeare's play, and that the printers, "finding Shakespeare's play successful, hoped to palm the spurious one on the public for his."[2] Hence the seeming emphasis on "Tragecall," although as noted above the epithet may be otherwise explained, and "as it was latelie Acted." This theory would bring the composition of Shakespeare's play within 1604–1605, a position supported to a certain extent by the internal

[1] Professor E. Arber's *Transcripts of The Stationers' Registers* (1554–1640), 4 vols., 1875–1877.

[2] Malone's *Shakespeare*, I, 352. F. G. Fleay in a notable contribution to Robinson's *Epitome of Literature*, 1879, strongly supports this view.

evidence, and the links of connection with *Hamlet* in Edgar's assumed madness, Lear's insanity, and such expressions as Edgar's in V, ii, 11 (see note).

A theory[1] that reconciles much of the evidence, external and internal, and explains the extraordinary variations between the text of the Quartos and that of the First Folio, is that Shakespeare's play was first written and performed in 1604–1605, and that this first draft was subjected to alteration and development until the performance at court in Christmas week, 1606. On the other hand, a strong argument in favor of the date of composition being as near as possible to the later time limit is that the plays selected for court performances were seldom or never old plays. It must also be remembered that the revival of the old play on the stage, and its publication "as it was latelie Acted," may have suggested the subject to Shakespeare.

Internal Evidence

1. "*These late eclipses,*" *etc., I, ii, 95.* Dr. Aldis Wright finds in Gloucester's speech, I, ii, 95–108, a reference to the great eclipse of the sun which took place in October, 1605, preceded by an eclipse of the moon in September. This eclipse of the sun excited much dismay and alarm, intensified by some noteworthy predictions of terrible consequences in church and state to follow 'concourses' in the same month of solar and lunar eclipses, which had been published in a book called *A Discoursive Probleme concerning Prophecies*, 1588, written by John Harvey. The reference to "these late eclipses," taken in connection with Edmund's "portend these divisions," I, ii, 119, and "I am thinking, brother, of

[1] A. A. Adee, Introduction, *King Lear*, Bankside Shakespeare.

a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses," I, ii, 123–124, has the characteristics of a contemporary hit. As such it would lose force or distinction the further it was in point of time from the exciting cause. What invalidates this allusion as evidence of date of composition is that eclipses of the sun and moon, also within a month, took place in 1590, 1598, 1601, 1606, 1607, and 1608. "In fixing the date of a play of Shakespeare, allusions to such matters as eclipses, earthquakes, etc., must be regarded as exceedingly treacherous criteria." — Halliwell-Phillips.

2. "*Machinations, hollowness, treachery*," *etc., I, ii, 103–104.* Dr. Wright also finds in Gloucester's words in the same speech, "machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders," I, ii, 103–104, a probable allusion to the Gunpowder Plot of November 5, 1605, his general conclusion being that Shakespeare did not begin to write *King Lear* till towards the close of that year.

3. *Substitution of "British man" for "Englishman," III, iv, 171.* In discussing the date of composition of *King Lear* Malone says: "This play is ascertained to have been written after the month of October, 1604, by a minute change which Shakespeare made in a traditional line, put into the mouth of Edgar: 'His word was still, Fye, foh, and fum, I smell the blood of a British man.'" Malone referred here to the formal union of the kingdoms, and the proclamation of James as king of Great Britain, October 24, 1604; but as Chalmers established,[1] "there was issued from Greenwich, on the 13th of May, 1603, a royal proclamation, declaring that until a complete union the King held and esteemed the two realms as presently united as one kingdom." That this idea of a

[1] Chalmers, *Supplemental Apology*, page 413.

united Britain had taken hold of the popular imagination as soon as James ascended the throne, is clear from the following lines in a *Panegyricke Congratulatory* by the poet Daniel, addressed to the king in 1603, before his arrival in London:

> Shake hands with union, O thou mightie state,
> Now thou art all great Britaine, and no more;
> No Scot, no English now, nor no debate.

'Britain' and 'British,' too, are the words constantly used in the old versions of the Lear story. With regard to the line, IV, vi, 228, where, as the textual notes show, the Folios read "English party" and the Quartos "British party," Malone is silent. On this difference in readings Dr. Wright has the following note: "It might be inferred that the line as it stands in the Folios was written before October, 1604, and that it was corrected before the play was printed in 1608. But it is at least as likely that Shakespeare, writing not long after 1604, while the change was still fresh, and before the word 'British' had become familiar in men's mouths, may inadvertently have written 'English' and subsequently changed it into 'British.'"

4. *Qualities of Style.* Without other evidence, the intensity of the emotional appeal, the management of every detail and situation, and the mastery of dramatic effect in the weaving of plot and subplot, would place the composition of *King Lear* midway in that group of plays dealing with the highest themes of tragedy, which begins with *Hamlet* and *Othello* and closes with *Timon of Athens* and *Coriolanus*. As already indicated, there are to be detected backward links with *Hamlet*, and the tragic awe inspired by many of Lear's utterances anticipates the titanic gloom of the later speeches of Timon.

5. *Diction and Verse Mechanism.* The diction of *King Lear* combines energy and definiteness to a peculiar degree.

This distinguishes the play from works of Shakespeare's middle period, where an interesting balance of thought and expression is dominant, with the diction clear, gliding, and continuous, and from those of the latest period, where the close texture, compactness, and frequent involution of the diction tend to obscurity. Verse and diction tests,[1] the proportion of prose and verse and of rhymed and unrhymed lines in the regular dialogue, the number of feminine endings, light endings, weak endings, run-on lines, short lines, etc. (see below, Versification and Diction), strengthen the case for the date of composition suggested by the other evidence.

III. EARLY EDITIONS

Quartos

1. *The First Quarto. King Lear*, duly entered in *The Stationers' Registers*, November 26, 1607, was printed for the first time in 1608, in the volume which is now called the First Quarto (Q_1), or, from the description of the printer's shop on the title-page, the "Pide Bull" Quarto. A facsimile of the title-page is given on the following page.

The extant copies of the First Quarto show peculiar variations in the spelling, punctuation, and occasionally the wording of the text. These variations[2] have led some editors to conclude that three or more editions of this version of

[1] An excellent summary of these tests will be found in Dowden's *Shakspere Primer*. See also Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature*, Vol. II, pages 47–51.

[2] All the more important are given in the Cambridge Shakespeare, edited by W. Aldis Wright. See also Furness's Variorum, *King Lear*, Appendix, pages 373–376.

M. William Shak-ſpeare:

HIS

True Chronicle Hiſtorie of the life and death of King LEAR and his three Daughters.

With the vnfortunate life of Edgar, *ſonne* and heire to the Earle of Gloſter, and his ſullen and aſſumed humor of TOM of Bedlam:

As it was played before the Kings Maieſtie at Whitehall vpon S. Stephans *night in Chriſtmas Hollidayes.*

By his Maieſties ſeruants playing vſually at the Gloabe on the Bancke-ſide.

LONDON,
Printed for *Nathaniel Butter*, and are to be ſold at his ſhop in *Pauls* Church-yard at the ſigne of the Pide Bull neere S^t^. *Auſtins* Gate, 1608

the play appeared in 1608, but the careful investigation of Dr. Furness and others has made tolerably clear that the variations are due to careless printing and the stitching together of corrected and uncorrected sheets in a variety of combinations. The obvious inference is that the work was prepared for publication in great haste.

2. *The Second Quarto.* The full title-page of the Second Quarto (Q_2), called by Furness the "N. Butter edition," is given in facsimile as the frontispiece of this volume. Here, as on the title-page of the First Quarto, peculiar prominence is given to the name of Shakespeare, and this has been interpreted as a countercheck to the attempt of the printers of *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters* to avail themselves of the popularity of Shakespeare's play. Though the Second Quarto is generally accepted as belonging to the year 1608, the date on the title-page, some Shakespeare scholars incline to the view that this date is assumed, and that the Quarto belongs to 1619, when Thomas Pavier and William Jaggard, having abandoned a scheme of publishing a collected quarto edition of Shakespeare's works, are supposed to have brought out, in uniform quarto on paper bearing the same watermarks, duplicate editions of plays printed in 1600 and 1608, and unscrupulously used the earlier dates to deceive the public.

As a text, the Second Quarto has little independent value. It was either derived from the same source as the First Quarto, or, as is more likely, printed from a copy of it, following now corrected and now uncorrected sheets.[1] Here

[1] For textual study the student may consult the facsimile reproductions of the Quartos prepared by Prætorius, Ashbee, or Griggs. See also Furness's Variorum, *King Lear*, Appendix, pages 353–376.

and there it amends, and, as the textual notes show, helps to establish a reading; more frequently it adds confusion to confusion. The so-called Third Quarto, or, from the name of the printer, the "Jane Bell" edition, which appeared in 1655, is but a careless reprint of the Second Quarto.

Folios

After the First and Second Quartos the next printing of *King Lear* was in 1623 in the First Folio, designated in the textual notes of this edition F_1. The First Folio is the famous volume in which all Shakespeare's collected plays (with the exception of *Pericles*, first printed in the Third Folio) were first given to the world. *The Tragedie of King Lear*, as it is called in the running title, stands between *Hamlet* and *Othello*, occupying pages 283–309, in the division named 'Tragedies.' It is one of the seventeen plays in the First Folio in which is indicated the division into acts and scenes.

The Folio text is shorter by upwards of 200 lines than that of the Quartos, but it contains about 60 lines not found in the Quartos, and there are hundreds of verbal variations, many of them simply metrically equivalent synonyms, as the textual notes of this volume show. The leading theories as to the relation of these two widely different texts (for in this connection the Quartos may be considered as constituting one text) are given below. The modern text of *King Lear* must necessarily be eclectic, based upon that of the Quartos and that of the First Folio, which throughout are complementary.

The Second Folio, F_2 (1632), corrects a few manifest misprints of the First Folio; and this corrected text is repeated with few changes, except in the way of slightly modernized spelling, in the Third Folio, F_3 (1663, 1664), and in the Fourth Folio, F_4 (1685).

Relation of Text of Quartos to that of the First Folio

The differences between the text of the First Folio and that of the Quartos constitute one of the difficult problems of Shakespearian textual criticism. As a rule the Folio text is in every way superior, and suggests an independent source, but again and again what are obviously printers' blunders in the Quartos are reproduced in the Folio. The evidence of this Quarto contamination, and the fact that the omissions in both versions do not affect either the plot development or the stage effect, and as such seem to be cuts made for acting purposes only (see notes, III, vii, 98–106; IV, vii, 85–97), suggest the following theory. The text of the Quartos is a hurriedly printed version of what was originally the court performance, probably taken down in the theatre in shorthand by a reporter or reporters, who imperfectly understood what the actors were saying, and who would of course reproduce words and expressions used to cover up slips of memory.[1] The Folio text, on the other hand, represents the cut and amended stage version, printed with considerable care by compositors who had before them a copy of one of the Quartos, probably the Second, to consult in places of difficulty. This theory does not absolutely preclude revision and alteration by Shakespeare.

Delius,[2] strongly supported by Schmidt, allows for no Shakespearian revision or change: "The omissions of the

[1] "Everything becomes clear, as soon as we suppose that the MS. for the Quartos was prepared by taking it down during a performance on the stage."— Schmidt. Shorthand was invented before 1600, and Heywood and other Elizabethan dramatists complained that it was used for pirating plays.

[2] *Ueber den ursprünglichen Text des King Lear, Jahrbuch*, X, 50.

Quartos are the blunders of the printers; the omissions of the Folios are the abridgments of the actors." This view has been ably contested by Koppel,[1] who holds that all the more important omissions, additions, and alterations represent revision by Shakespeare himself, and concludes: "The original form was, essentially, that of the Quarto, then followed a longer form, with the additions in the Folio, as substantially our modern editions have again restored them; then the shortest form, as it is preserved for us in the Folio."

Nahum Tate's Version

With the reopening of the theatres at the Restoration and the new attraction of actresses in the female parts, there was a revival of interest in Shakespeare's plays, and several were put upon the stage in versions and adaptations to suit the taste of the time. At the suggestion of D'Avenant, the poet laureate, Dryden wrote a version of *The Tempest* (*The Enchanted Island*), in which, among other monstrosities, was introduced, as a counterpart to Shakespeare's plot, the conception of a man who had never seen a woman; and, strengthened by a quotation from Dryden in favor of making "a Tragedy end happily, for 't is more difficult to Save than 't is to Kill,"[2] Nahum Tate, poet laureate from 1692 to 1715, rewrote *King Lear*, making Edgar a lover of Cordelia, omitting the Fool, and giving the play a happy dénouement in the union of the lovers and the restoration of Lear to his kingdom. Thus did he make, to use his own naïve words, "the Tale conclude in a Success to the innocent distrest persons: Otherwise I must have incumbred the Stage with dead

[1] *Textkritische Studien über Richard III u. King Lear*, Dresden.

[2] From Dryden's Preface to *The Spanish Fryar*.

Bodies." [1] This version, with the title *The History of King Lear*, "as acted at the Duke's Theatre," and "reviv'd with alterations," was published in 1681. It remained the dominant acting edition of the play until 1823, when, as the theatrical announcement ran, "in obedience to the suggestion of men of literary eminence from the times of Addison," Edmund Kean restored the tragic ending, though omitting the Fool. Fifteen years later Macready produced on the stage the whole tragedy as written by Shakespeare (see below, Stage History). It is to Tate's version and its influence that Lamb refers in the famous sentence, "Tate has put his hook into the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily." In this connection it should not be forgotten that Tate as well as Dryden was fully alive to the transcendent literary and imaginative greatness of Shakespeare. The spirit of the age was responsible for what seems to-day the utter perversion of taste and lack of critical appreciation in these Shakespeare adaptations.

Rowe's Editions

The first critical editor of Shakespeare's plays was Nicholas Rowe, poet laureate to George I. His first edition was issued in 1709 in six octavo volumes; a second edition, in eight volumes, was published in 1714.[2] His text followed very closely that of the Fourth Folio, but with modernization of spelling, punctuation, and occasionally grammar.

[1] Tate also rearranged *Richard II*, altering the names of the dramatis personæ, and it was performed as *The Sicilian Usurper*. In his hands *Coriolanus* became *Ingratitude of a Commonwealth*.

[2] The *Poems* were not included in either edition, but were published in 1715 from the edition of 1640.

Rowe, an experienced playwright, marked the entrances and exits of the characters in a thorough and systematic way, and introduced many stage directions. He also gave complete lists of dramatis personæ, which have been the basis for all later lists. Rowe was the first man to write a life of Shakespeare. This life, in which are preserved many valuable traditions, was published along with his edition of the plays, and entitles Rowe to the eternal gratitude of the world.

IV. VERSIFICATION AND DICTION

Blank Verse

The greater part of *King Lear* is in blank verse, — the unrhymed, iambic five-stress (decasyllabic) verse, or iambic pentameter, introduced into England from Italy by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, about 1540, and used by him in a translation of the second and fourth books of Vergil's *Æneid*. Nicholas Grimald (*Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557) employed the measure for the first time in English original poetry, and its roots began to strike deep into British soil and absorb substance. It is peculiarly significant that Sackville and Norton should have used it as the measure of *Gorboduc*, the first English tragedy (see above, Sources). About the time when Shakespeare arrived in London the infinite possibilities of blank verse as a vehicle for dramatic poetry and passion were being shown by Kyd, and above all by Marlowe. Blank verse as used by Shakespeare is really an epitome of the development of the measure in connection with the English drama. In his earlier plays the blank verse is often similar to that of *Gorboduc*. The tendency is to adhere to the syllable-counting

principle, to make the line the unit, the sentence and phrase coinciding with the line (end-stopped verse), and to use five perfect iambic feet to the line.[1] In plays of the middle period, such as *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, written between 1596 and 1600, the blank verse is more like that of Kyd and Marlowe, with less monotonous regularity in the structure and an increasing tendency to carry on the sense from one line to another without a syntactical or rhetorical pause at the end of the line (run-on verse, *enjambement*). Redundant syllables now abound, and the melody is richer and fuller. In Shakespeare's later plays the blank verse breaks away from bondage to formal line limits, and sweeps all along with it in freedom, power, and organic unity.

In the 2238 lines of blank verse in *King Lear* are found stress modifications of all kinds. There are 67 feminine (or double, redundant, hypermetrical) endings, 5 light endings, 90 speech endings not coincident with line endings, and 191 short lines, the greatest number of short lines in any Shakespeare play. Such variations give to the verse flexibility and power, in addition to music and harmony. It is significant that in *King Lear* is only one weak ending. Light endings and weak endings[2] are found most abundantly in Shakespeare's very latest plays. For example, in *The Tempest* are 42 light endings and 25 weak endings.

[1] There are a few such normal lines in *King Lear*, — for example, I, i, 39, 42, 52, etc.

[2] Light endings, as defined by Ingram, are such words as *am*, *can*, *do*, *has*, *I*, *thou*, etc., on which "the voice can to a certain small extent dwell"; weak endings are words like *and*, *for*, *from*, *if*, *in*, *of*, *or*, which "we are forced to run . . . in pronunciation . . . into the closest connection with the opening words of the succeeding line."

Alexandrines

While French prosodists apply the term Alexandrine only to a twelve-syllable line with the pause after the sixth syllable, as in I, i, 219, it is generally used in English to designate iambic six-stress verse, or iambic hexameter, of which we have examples in I, i, 217; II, ii, 138; IV, iii, 42, etc. Many of these occur when there is a change of speaker. The Alexandrine was a favorite Elizabethan measure, and it was common in moral plays and the earlier heroic drama. English literature has no finer examples of this verse than the last line of each stanza of *The Faerie Queene.* In *King Lear* are about 60 Alexandrines.

Rhyme

1. *Couplets.* In the history of the English drama, rhyme as a vehicle of expression precedes blank verse and prose. Miracle plays, moral plays, and interludes are all in rhyming measures. In Shakespeare may be seen the same development. A progress from more to less rhyme is a sure index to his growth as a dramatist and a master of expression. In the early *Love's Labour's Lost* are more than 500 rhyming five-stress iambic couplets; in the very late *The Winter's Tale* there is not one.[1] In *King Lear* are 37 rhyming five-stress iambic couplets, used chiefly for the following purposes: (1) to give a certain amount of emotional pitch and intensity, as in the king of France's farewell, I, i, 248–255, Lear's reply, I, i, 256–259, and Edgar's speech, III, vi, 100–111; (2) to give epigrammatic effect to a sententious generalization, I, iv,

[1] The Chorus speech introducing Act IV is excepted as not part of the regular dialogue.

335–336; and (3), as so frequently in Elizabethan plays, to mark an exit or round off a speech.

2. *The Fool's Snatches.* The Fool's longer snatches of rhyming 'patter' recall both in spirit and in rhythm the extraordinary verse in which John Skelton wrote his satires against Wolsey and the vices and social abuses of the time of Henry VIII. Such 'Skeltonical verse' as that of I, iv, 111–118; I, iv, 307–311, etc., may be regarded either as irregular anapæstic two-stress (dimeter) with feminine ending and the first foot an iamb, or as amphibrachic two-stress changing to anapæstic in the closing couplet. In I, iv, 130–137, are eight lines of iambic three-stress (trimeter), and the two stanzas in the speeches which follow are, like the eight lines in II, iv, 72–79, examples of the ballad stanza of four-stress (tetrameter) iambic alternating with three-stress ('common metre'). The regular measure of the old ballads seems to have been originally four-stress throughout, as in the famous stanza, III, ii, 69–72. The Fool's 'prophecy,' III, ii, 75–86, is in iambic four-stress (octosyllabic) verse with feminine endings and trochaic variations.

3. *Edgar's Snatches.* Most of Edgar's snatches are in ballad rhythm, more or less irregular and with a tendency towards doggerel, but the most characteristic bit of rhyming verse which he utters when feigning madness, III, vi, 64–71, is in the four-stress trochaic verse catalectic, so often used by Shakespeare for the speech of supernatural beings. These lines may be regarded as a spell or incantation.

Prose

In the development of the English drama the use of prose as a vehicle of expression entitled to equal rights with verse

was due to Lyly. He was the first to use prose with power and distinction in original plays, and did memorable service in preparing the way for Shakespeare's achievement. Interesting attempts have been made to explain Shakespeare's distinctive use of verse and prose; and of recent years there has been much discussion of the question "whether we are justified in supposing that Shakespeare was guided by any fixed principle in his employment of verse and prose, or whether he merely employed them, as fancy suggested, for the sake of variety and relief."[1] It is a significant fact that in many of his earlier plays there is little or no prose, and that the proportion of prose to blank verse increases with the decrease of rhyme. In *King Lear* four kinds of prose may be distinguished: (1) The prose of formal documents, as in the forged letter, I, ii, 41–48; Goneril's letter, IV, vi, 239–245; and the Herald's proclamation, V, iii, 111–114. In Shakespeare, prose is the usual medium for letters, proclamations, and other formal documents. (2) The prose of 'low life' and the speech of comic characters, as in the Fool's speeches. This is a development of the humorous prose found, for example, in Greene's comedies that deal with country life. (3) The colloquial prose of dialogue, as in the talk between Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund, when the play opens. (4) The prose of abnormal mentality. It is an interesting fact that Shakespeare should so often make persons whose state of mind is abnormal, or seemingly so, speak in prose.

[1] Professor J. Churton Collins's *Shakespeare as a Prose Writer.* See Delius's *Die Prosa in Shakespeares Dramen* (*Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, V, 227–273); Janssen's *Die Prosa in Shakespeares Dramen*; Professor Hiram Corson's *An Introduction to the Study of Shakespeare*, pages 83–98.

Prose is the speech of Lady Macbeth in the sleep-walking scene; Hamlet when playing the madman speaks prose, as Edgar does when feigning madness; Ophelia in her insanity either sings snatches of old songs or speaks prose; the development of Lear's insanity may be traced by the prose form of his speech (see note, I, v, 22), and, as Professor Bradley has pointed out, almost all his speeches, after he has become definitely insane, are in prose; where he wakes from sleep recovered, the verse returns. Bradley remarks further [1]:

> The prose enters with that speech which closes with his trying to tear off his clothes; but he speaks in verse — some of it very irregular — in the Timon-like speeches where his intellect suddenly in his madness seems to regain the force of his best days (IV, vi). . . . The idea underlying this custom of Shakespeare's evidently is that the regular rhythm of verse would be inappropriate where the mind is supposed to have lost its balance and to be at the mercy of chance impressions coming from without (as sometimes with Lear), or of ideas emerging from its unconscious depths and pursuing one another across its passive surface.

V. HISTORIC TIME OF THE PLAY

Much irrelevant criticism has been spent upon the circumstance that in the details and costume of *King Lear*, Shakespeare did not hold himself to the date of the reign of Lear as given in story and legend. Holinshed states that "Leir the sonne of Baldud was admitted ruler ouer the Britaines in the yeare of the world 3105, at what time Joas reigned in Juda," and Shakespeare himself humorously places the time as before Merlin (III, ii, 87), and yet the play abounds in the manners, sentiments, and allusions of modern England.

[1] *Shakespearean Tragedy*, pages 398–399.

Malone is scandalized that Edgar in the play should speak of Nero, while the old chroniclers place Lear's reign upwards of eight hundred years before Nero's birth. The painstaking Douce, also, is in dire distress at Shakespeare's blunder in substituting the manners of England under the Tudors for those of the ancient Britons.

To make these points, or such as these, any ground of impeachment, is to mistake totally the nature and design of the work. For the drama is not, nor was meant to be, in any sense of the term a history; it is a tragedy, and nothing else, and as such is as free of chronological circumscriptions as human nature itself. The historical or legendary matter, be it more or less, neither shapes nor guides the structure of the piece, but is used in entire subservience to the general ends of tragic representation. The play, therefore, does not fall within the lines of any jurisdiction for settling dates; it is amenable to no laws but those of art, any more than if it were entirely of Shakespeare's own creation.

The improbability of certain incidents has been severely censured. Improbable enough some of the incidents are, but these nowise touch the substantial truth of the play; the dramatist merely uses them as occasions for what he has to unfold of the inner life of nature and man. Besides, he did not invent them. They stood dressed in many attractive shapes before him, inviting his hand. And his use of them is amply justified in that they were matters of common and familiar tradition, and as such already domesticated in the popular mind and faith. The significance of the pagan environment must be remembered in this connection. As Schlegel said, "to save in some degree the honor of human nature, Shakespeare never wishes his spectators to forget

that the story takes place in a dreary and barbarous age." "We find throughout the play that we are in the midst of a primeval society, whose 'gods' sit very far removed from it in the iron heavens, and which still feels the instinct of 'the ape and tiger' stirring in its blood. This kinship between man and beast is emphasized by the curiously frequent references to animals, nearly always under their predatory or noisome aspects."[1] — F. S. Boas.

VI. SCENE OF ACTION

In harmony with the setting of *King Lear* in the dark backward and abysm of time is a peculiar vagueness as to where the action takes place. In Quartos and Folios the play stands bare of the accretions of stage directions and scene localities, so familiar to the modern reader, and the text conveys no hint as to where in Britain stood Lear's palace or the castle of the Duke of Albany. Nowhere in the great Shakespeare plays is there such a dearth of locality suggestions as in *King Lear*. Picturesque bits of description occur; we have glimpses of "shadowy forests," plenteous rivers," "wide-skirted meads," a district where "for many miles about there's scarce a bush," and a cliff "whose high and bending head looks fearfully in the confined deep," but these do not help in determining a topographical setting. Even the Dover references are geographically hazy and bewilderingly

[1] See *Animal Nature in 'King Lear,'* a paper by J. Kirkman, published in *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1877; also Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 266–268. These references to the lower animals make another link of connection between *King Lear* and *Timon of Athens*.

indefinite. But this very vagueness as to place as well as to time stimulates the imagination to grasp the cosmic, universal element in the play. It gives "the feeling of vastness, the feeling not of a scene or particular place, but of a world; or, to speak more accurately, of a particular place which is also a world. . . . This world, we are told, is called Britain; but we should no more look for it in an atlas than for the place, called Caucasus, where Prometheus was chained by Strength and Force and comforted by the daughters of Ocean."— A. C. Bradley.

VII. DURATION OF ACTION

Eccles was the first critic to discuss the question of dramatic time in *King Lear*. In an edition of the play published in 1794 he elaborated an ingenious time analysis in which the action is made to cover nine days, with an interval of several months between the division of the kingdom and Lear's complaint about his diminished retinue. This scheme is vitiated by an alteration in the order of the scenes to make them fit it. Like many others who mistake the difference between a poet's point of view and a formal historian's, Eccles held that Shakespeare had "indistinct ideas regarding the progress of the action," and was liable to "unhappy oversights."

In a famous time analysis printed in the *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1879, P. A. Daniel makes the action of the drama extend to ten days, with an interval of "something less than a fortnight" after the second day. Though Daniel complains of the order of the scenes, he does not rearrange them, and is faithful throughout to the

Shakespeare text. The length of the interval mentioned is based upon Lear's words "within a fortnight," I, iv, 284. The following is Daniel's time analysis in tabulated form:

Day 1. — I, i.
Day 2. — I, ii.
An interval of something less than a fortnight.
Day 3. — I, iii–v.
Day 4. — II, i–ii.
Day 5. — II, iii–iv; III, i–vi.
Day 6. — III, vii; IV, i.
Day 7. — IV, ii.
Perhaps an interval of a day or two.
Day 8. — IV, iii.
Day 9. — IV, iv–vi.
Day 10. — IV, vii; V, i–iii.

VIII. DRAMATIC CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

King Lear is more than a tragedy of a normal Shakespearian type, representing a conflict between an individual and certain forces which environ, antagonize, and overwhelm. From the point of view of technique it is the most complicated dramatic work of Elizabethan literature. The plot is woven of a main plot and a subplot of equal emotional intensity, each with its genesis in the primal world-tragedy of the breach of family ties, and involving an unusually large number of important dramatis personæ, who fall into two strongly contrasted groups. From the first scene, with its unique importance in opening up directly the action of the play,

both plots are rapidly developed through incidents so diverse that there is no monotony, and at the same time they are so interwoven that dramatically the development of each is made to depend directly upon that of the other.[1] The result is a marvellous unity of effect in the drama as a whole. Into the crowded scenes of the play are thrown all the elements of tragic interest which the Elizabethan drama knew, with madness and blood-revenge prominent in the double climax. From the passion with which in the Gloucester plot is urged the motive of the Lear plot, an arrangement found in no other Shakespeare play where plots are combined, comes to the spectator the feeling that he is witnessing what Schlegel called "a great commotion in the moral universe." The sweep of the design almost blurs at times the details of the execution, but the effect, heightened by the thunders and lightnings that accompany the crisis, is to intensify the cosmic significance of the ruined home and outraged family affection.

In *King Lear*, as in every great drama, five stages may be noted in the plot development: (1) the exposition, or introduction; (2) the complication, rising action, or growth; (3) the climax, crisis, or turning point; (4) the resolution, falling action, or consequence; and (5) the dénouement, catastrophe,[2] or conclusion. Let it not be thought for a moment

[1] "The pity felt by Gloucester for the fate of Lear becomes the means which enables his son Edmund to effect his complete destruction, and affords the outcast Edgar an opportunity of being the savior of his father. On the other hand, Edmund is active in the cause of Regan and Goneril, and the criminal passion which they both entertain for him induces them to execute justice on each other and on themselves." — A. W. Schlegel.

[2] "*Catastrophe* — the change or revolution which produces the conclusion or final event of a dramatic piece." — Johnson.

that each of these stages is clearly differentiated. As a rule they pass insensibly into each other, as they do in life.

Analysis by Act and Scene[1]

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. In *King Lear* the exposition is in the closest conjunction with the complication or rising action. In lines 1–28 all the leading characters, except Edgar and the Fool, are introduced; the two plots and their interaction are prepared for, and the keynote of both Gloucester's character and Lear's is struck. With line 29 and the old king's announcement of his "darker purpose" begins the action of the Lear plot. "Darker" suggests the atmosphere of the drama. The love test, the division of the kingdom, the disinheritance of Cordelia, and the banishment of Kent, determine the issue of the whole action.

Act I, Scene ii. The action of the Gloucester plot begins with Edmund's soliloquy, in which, like Richard the Third, he is determined to prove a villain, and his persuasion of Gloucester by a forged letter that Edgar wishes to conspire with him in a plot to kill their father and share his property. Edgar is introduced, and his open-mindedness results in his playing into the hands of his arch-enemy.

Act I, Scene iii — Scene iv, 1–186. Goneril's assumption of authority and her attitude to her father are revealed in her conversation with Oswald, who presents an effective contrast to Kent. Kent disguised enters Lear's service, and Lear pathetically begins to realize the position in which he has placed himself. In his answer to the Knight, iv, 64–68, is given a glimpse of his nobler nature. With the entry of the Fool, the keynote of whose character is struck in lines 69–70, the exposition is complete.

[1] "It must be understood that a play can be analyzed into very different schemes of plot. It must not be thought that one of these schemes is right and the rest wrong; but the schemes will be better or worse in proportion as — while of course representing correctly the facts of the play — they bring out more or less of what ministers to our sense of design."— Moulton.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene iv, 187–338. The function of the Fool in evolving the plot is noteworthy. His poignant wit unmasks the real Goneril and compels her outburst of passion, which sets in motion the machinery that brings about the final overthrow of Lear's mind and the concluding scenes of devilry and death.

Act I, Scene v. While the Fool is preparing Lear for the way he will be treated by Regan, his sallies touch the old man to the quick. Lear begins to feel remorse for his treatment of Cordelia (line 22), and the tragic note is struck in all its terror in the cry to be saved from madness (lines 42–43). The very jests with which the Fool strives to avert his master's madness coöperate to augment it, fixing his mind on that which is the irritating cause.

Act II, Scene i. The Gloucester plot is developed by Edmund's success in turning his father against Edgar. When Edmund brings Regan and Cornwall to Gloucester's castle, the way is prepared for the union of the two plots. The chief link between the Lear plot and the Gloucester plot is Edmund's association with Regan and Goneril.

Act II, Scene ii. While Regan solicits Gloucester's aid and Cornwall invites Edmund's service, Oswald and Kent fight and Kent is put in the stocks, where, before he sleeps, he intimates that he is in communication with Cordelia.

Act II, Scene iii. Edgar plans to disguise himself as a Bedlam beggar. "His assumed madness serves the great purpose of taking off part of the shock which would otherwise be caused by the true madness of Lear." — Coleridge.

Act II, Scene iv. Lear's anguish reaches its height when Regan shows herself to be crueler even than Goneril, and with the words "I shall go mad," line 280, he rushes out into a night of wild storm.

Act III, Scene i. The plot is further complicated by the news communicated by Kent to a friend that France, of which country Cordelia is now queen, has planned an invasion of Britain. The tide begins to turn against Regan and Goneril.

Act III, Scene ii. Lear, the Fool, and Kent are in the storm. Here, as in *Julius Cæsar*, the storm is the dramatic background to

the tempest of human passion. The old man appeals from his daughters to the heavens, and the heavens prove as deaf to his call as either Goneril or Regan. Amid the "dreadful pudder," line 45, of the elements, his "wits begin to turn," line 62.

Act III, Scene iii. The Gloucester plot is now closely interwoven with the Lear plot. Gloucester tells Edmund that he intends to aid Lear, and in this confidence he plays unwittingly into the hands of his enemies. The result is that he is suspected of being friendly to France, and the relations between Edmund, Cornwall, and Regan are strengthened.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene iv. In the hovel scene the Lear plot and the Gloucester plot are interwoven as one. Here, to use Aristotle's famous figure, all the elements of interest in main plot and subplot are tightened into a compact knot of general entanglement. Edgar is the victim of the Gloucester plot, and his disguise as a Bedlam beggar is the climax to the tragedy of his own sufferings; contact with the feigned madness of Edgar completes the overthrow of Lear's mind, and, while the storm continues to rumble, the old king begins to tear off his clothes. Gloucester, seeking to save Lear, reaches the hovel, and in his words to Kent, lines 153–156, Edgar learns how his father had been deceived, and his anger against him is turned to pity. The beginning of the resolution in a drama is usually in the closest union with the climax. "From this meeting of the mad Edgar with the mad Lear there springs at once the final stroke in the misery Gloucester suffers from the son he has favored [the attempt to save Lear being betrayed by Edmund, who becomes thereby the cause of the vengeance which puts out his father's eyes] and the beginning of the forgiving love he is to experience from the son he has wronged." — Moulton.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act III, Scene v. Edmund's intrigue is successful. He betrays his father to Cornwall, and is made by Cornwall Earl of Gloucester. The development of the action up to this point in the drama has

been masterly. With the resolution or falling action, there is a slackening of the emotional tension until the scenes immediately before the dénouement. All through the resolution Edmund and Edgar are prominent in the working out of the causes and conditions which are to bring about the catastrophe.

Act III, Scene vi. While Lear in his madness arraigns Regan and Goneril in an imaginary trial, with Edgar and the Fool as judges, Gloucester prepares to send him in a litter on the way to Dover to meet Cordelia.

Act III, Scene vii. Gloucester, betrayed by Edmund, is brought before Cornwall and Regan. He is "pinioned like a thief," and Regan hears from his lips the first condemnation of her atrocious cruelty to her father. Stung by his reproaches, Cornwall gives orders for his eyes to be put out. In his agony Gloucester calls upon Edmund to avenge him, and he learns from Regan in a bitter speech that it is Edmund who has brought him to this pass. Cornwall receives a deathblow from a servant's sword.

Act IV, Scene i. The wronged Edgar lovingly tends his blind father on the way to Dover, and his tender regard is like that of Cordelia for Lear. From now on the place of Gloucester, who has acted as a link between the two plots, is taken by Edmund, whose story becomes one with that of Regan and Goneril.

Act IV, Scene ii. The success of Edmund's intrigue is entangling him in a relation which will be the nemesis to punish him. The adulterous love of Goneril for Edmund is resented by Albany.

Act IV, Scene iii. This scene, omitted in the Folios, is in dramatic contrast to the preceding. In a conversation between Kent and a Gentleman is revealed the solicitude with which Cordelia had learned of the treatment to which her father had been subjected.

Act IV, Scene iv. With drum and colors and attended by soldiers, indicating her rank as queen and the military preparations in progress, Cordelia re-enters upon the scene. In conversation with a Doctor she gives a wonderful word picture of Lear, who, "mad as the vex'd sea," line 2, has wandered away, crowned, like Ophelia, with wild flowers.

Act IV, Scene v. Goneril and the widowed Regan are rivals for the affection of Edmund. Regan tries to induce Oswald to betray

his mistress, but in vain. One element in the catastrophe is plainly foreshadowed.

Act IV, Scene vi. This long scene is crowded with action. Edgar persuades his father that, though he threw himself over Dover cliff, he has been miraculously preserved. Lear in his insane wandering encounters Gloucester, led by Edgar, and the two hapless old sufferers talk until Lear is found by the attendants sent in search of him. Gloucester is then attacked by Oswald, who hopes to win high reward by killing him; but Edgar interposes, and Oswald is killed. On his body Edgar finds a letter from Goneril to Edmund proposing that he kill Albany and marry her. He plans to inform the "death-practis'd duke."

Act IV, Scene vii. In all his great tragedies, with the notable exception of *Othello*, when the forces of the resolution or falling action are gathering towards the dénouement, Shakespeare introduces a scene which appeals to an emotion different from any of those excited elsewhere in the play. "As a rule this new emotion is pathetic; and the pathos is not terrible or lacerating, but, even if painful, is accompanied by the sense of beauty and by an outflow of admiration or affection, which come with an inexpressible sweetness after the tension of the crisis and the first counter-stroke. So it is with the reconciliation of Brutus and Cassius, and the arrival of the news of Portia's death. The most famous instance of this effect is the scene where Lear wakes from sleep and finds Cordelia bending over him, perhaps the most tear-compelling passage in literature." — Bradley.

Act V, Scene i. The action now falls rapidly to the dénouement. Interest in the preparations by Edmund and Albany for the impending battle with the French army is subordinated to the interest in the bitter division between Regan and Goneril caused by jealousy of Edmund. Edgar, disguised, brings Goneril's treacherous letter to Albany, and arranges that, if Cordelia loses, he should call for a champion to challenge Edgar.

Act V, Scene ii. Between military alarums Edgar takes farewell of Gloucester. Lear and Cordelia are taken prisoners. The insignificance of this battle as compared with the corresponding battles in *Julius Cæsar* and *Macbeth* is due partly to the dramatic necessity

for concentrating attention on the main interest of the plot, and partly to the fact that while the play calls for sympathy with Lear and Cordelia, Elizabethan patriotism demanded that the British forces win, and in these circumstances the more meagre the description the better (see note, V, ii, 5).

V. Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (the Knot Untied)

Act V, Scene iii. The action of the dénouement is swift and marvellously concentrated. The results of all the varied actions are gathered up in 326 lines, where every word tells. All the leading characters of the opening scene gather to receive the reward of their deeds. It is the sudden reaping of a terrible sowing. Albany demands the release of Cordelia and Lear, and Edmund refuses to give them up. The quarrel that ensues shows to what an insane length had gone the indecent rivalry of Regan and Goneril over Edmund. Regan, given poison by her sister, dies horribly. Albany taunts his wife with the incriminating letter, charges Edmund with treason, and calls for the champion. Edgar enters the lists, and Edmund falls. Goneril stabs herself to death, and, while Edgar hastens to save the prisoners, Lear totters on the scene with murdered Cordelia in his arms, and in a wild burst of grief over her, dies. The wheel, indeed, is come full circle. The "darker purpose" of the opening scene has brought about this holocaust. Mortals are punished for their mistakes as well as for their crimes, and the innocent are overwhelmed in the disasters wrought by fools and knaves.

IX. THE STAGING OF THE SCENE OF LEAR'S REUNION WITH CORDELIA

At the beginning of IV, vii, the scene of Lear's reunion with Cordelia, the stage direction found in most modern editions is:

Scene VII. *A tent in the French camp.* Lear *on a bed asleep, soft music playing;* Gentleman *and others attending. Enter* Cordelia, Kent, *and* Doctor

Koppel[1] has made clear that this stage direction, undoubtedly an inheritance from the Nahum Tate version, is at variance with the text and destroys both the dramatic and the poetical significance of the first meeting of Cordelia and her father since they parted in I, i. The text shows that Cordelia has not seen her father until the moment before she begins, "O my dear father" (line 26).

The stage direction in Quartos and First Folio make no mention of Lear at the beginning of the scene, indicating that he is not on the stage at all. The Quartos give no subsequent stage direction in the scene, but in the First Folio, immediately after Cordelia has asked, "Is he array'd?"[2] the stage direction is, *Enter Lear in a chaire carried by Seruants.* The moment of this entrance, as so frequently in the First Folio, is probably too soon, and should come at the words, "Please you, draw near" (line 25).

Professor Bradley sums up his argument in support of the First Folio stage direction as follows:

> This arrangement (1) allows Kent his proper place in the scene; (2) makes it clear that Cordelia has not seen her father before; (3) makes her first sight of him a theatrical crisis in the best sense; (4) makes it quite natural that he should kneel; (5) makes it obvious why he should leave the stage again when he shows signs of exhaustion; and (6) is the only arrangement which has the slightest authority. . . . Of course the chair arrangement is primitive, but the Elizabethans did not care about such things. What they cared for was dramatic effect.

[1] *Textkritische Studien über Richard III u. King Lear*, Dresden, 1877. Cf. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*, pages 453–456.

[2] 'Array'd' here has reference to his being properly tended after his mad wanderings in the fields, crowned with wild flowers. The Gentleman's mention of 'fresh garments' makes this clear.

X. THE CHARACTERS

As a representation of life and nature, *King Lear* has been censured because of grave improbabilities in the depiction of character. The play, it must be confessed, sets forth an extreme diversity of moral complexion, but especially a boldness and lustihood in crime such as cannot but seem unnatural if tried by the rule, or even by the exceptions, of what we are used to see in nature. Measuring, indeed, the capabilities of man by the standard of our own observations, we shall find all the higher representations of art, and even many well-attested things of history, too much for belief. But this is not the way to deal with such things; our business is to be taught by them as they are, and not to crush them down to the measure of what we already know.

In this connection it should be remembered that the scene of the play is laid in a period of time when the innate peculiarities of men were much less subjected than in our day to the stamp of a common impression. For the influences that bear on modern life cannot but generate more uniformity of character; and this tends to make us regard as monstrous that rankness of growth, those great crimes and great virtues which are recorded of earlier times, and which furnish the material of deep tragedy. For the process of civilization, if it does not kill out the aptitudes of rampant crime, at least involves a constant discipline of prudence that keeps them in a more decorous reserve. But suppose the pressure of such motives and restraints to be wanting, and then it will not appear so very incredible that there should be just such spontaneous outcomings of wicked impulse, just such redundant transpirations of original sin, as are displayed in *King Lear*.

Goneril and Regan

The characters in *King Lear* fall into strongly contrasted groups of good and evil beings; and as the main action of the drama is shaped by the energy of evil, it is natural to begin with those in whom that energy prevails.

There is no accounting for the conduct of Goneril and Regan but by supposing them possessed with a strong original impulse of malignity. The main points of their action were taken from the old story. Character, in the proper sense of the term, they have none in the legend; and the dramatist invested them with characters suitable to the part they were believed to have acted.

Whatever of soul these beings possess is all in the head; they have no heart to guide or inspire their understanding, and but enough of understanding to seize occasions and frame excuses for their heartlessness. Without affection, they are also without shame; there being barely so much of human blood in their veins as may suffice for quickening the brain without sending a blush to the cheek. With a sort of hell-inspired tact, they feel their way to a fitting occasion, but drop the mask as soon as their ends are reached, caring little or nothing for appearances after their falsehood has done its work. There is a smooth, glib rhetoric in their professions of love, unwarmed with the least grace of real feeling, and a certain wiry virulence and intrepidity of mind in their after-speaking, that is very terrible. No touch of nature finds a response in their bosoms; no atmosphere of comfort can abide their presence: we feel that they have somewhat within that turns the milk of humanity to venom, which all the wounds they can inflict are but opportunities for casting.

The subordinate plot of the drama serves the purpose of relieving the improbability of their behavior. Some have indeed censured this plot as an embarrassment to the main one, forgetting, perhaps, that to raise and sustain the feelings at any great height there must be some breadth of basis. A degree of evil which, if seen altogether alone, would strike us as superhuman, makes a very different impression when it has the support of proper sympathies and associations. This effect is in a good measure secured by Edmund's independent concurrence with Goneril and Regan in wickedness. It looks as if some malignant planet had set the elements of evil astir in many hearts at the same time; so that "unnaturalness between the child and the parent" were become, it would seem, the order of the day.

Besides, the agreement of the sister fiends in filial ingratitude might seem, of itself, to argue some sisterly attachment between them. So that, to bring out their characters truly, it had to be shown that the same principle which unites them against their father will, on the turning of occasion, divide them against each other. Hence the necessity of setting them forth in relations of such a kind as may breed strife between them. In Edmund, accordingly, they find a character wicked enough, and energetic enough in his wickedness, to interest their feelings; and because they are both alike taken with him, therefore they will cut their way to him through each other's life. And it is noteworthy that their passion for him proceeds mainly upon his treachery to his father, as though from such similarity of action they inferred a congeniality of mind. For even to have hated each other from love of any one but a villain, and because of his villainy, had seemed a degree of virtue in beings such as they are.

There is so much sameness of temper and behavior in these two she-tigers that we find it somewhat difficult to distinguish them as individuals; their characteristic traits being, as it were, fused and run together in the heat of a common malice. Both are actuated by an extreme ferocity; which, however, up to the time of receiving their portions, we must suppose to have been held in check by a most artful and vigilant selfishness. And the malice of Goneril, the eldest, appears still to be under some restraint, from feeling that her husband is not in sympathy with her. For Albany, though rather timid and tardy in showing it, remains true to the old king; his tardiness probably springing, at least in part, from a reluctance to make a square issue with his wife, who, owing to her superiority of rank and position, had somewhat the advantage of him in their marriage. Regan, on the other hand, has in Cornwall a husband whose heart beats in perfect unison with her own against her father; and the confidence of his sympathy appears to discharge her malice entirely from the restraints of caution, and to give it a peculiar quickness and alertness of action. Near the close of the king's last interview with them, we have the following:

> GONERIL. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
> From those that she calls servants or from mine?
> REGAN. Why not, my lord? If then they chanc'd to slack you,
> We could control them. If you will come to me —
> For now I spy a danger — I entreat you
> To bring but five-and-twenty; to no more
> Will I give place or notice.
> LEAR. I gave you all —
> REGAN. And in good time you gave it.
> LEAR. — Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
> But kept a reservation to be follow'd
> With such a number. [II, iv, 237–247.]

This passage is quoted mainly to draw attention to the concentrated wolfishness of heart in those few words, "And in good time you gave it," snapped out in reply to the pathetic appeal, "I gave you all." Human speech cannot be more intensely charged with fury. And this cold, sharp venom of retort is what chiefly discriminates Regan from Goneril; otherwise they seem too much like repetitions of each other to come fairly within the circle of nature, who never repeats herself. Yet their very agreement in temper and spirit renders them the fitter for the work they do. For the sameness of treatment thence proceeding is all the more galling and unbearable forasmuch as it appears the result of a set purpose, a conspiracy coolly formed and unrelentingly pursued. That they should lay on their father the blame of their own ingratitude, and stick their poisoned tongues into him under pretence of doing him good, is a further refinement of malice not more natural to them than tormenting to him. It is indeed difficult to conceive how creatures could be framed more apt to drive mad any one who had set his heart on receiving any comfort or kindness from them.

For the behavior of Regan and Goneril after the death of Cornwall, and their final transports of mutual fierceness, Shakespeare prepares us by the moralizing he puts into the mouth of Albany:

> That nature which contemns its origin
> Cannot be border'd certain in itself. [IV, ii, 32–33.]

meaning, apparently, that where the demon of filial ingratitude reigns, there the heart is ripening for the most unnatural crimes, so that there is no telling what it will do, or where it will stop. The action of Goneril and Regan, taken all

together, seems the most improbable thing in the drama. It is not easy to think of them otherwise than as instruments of the plot; not so much ungrateful persons as personifications of ingratitude.

Edmund

For the union of wit and wickedness, Edmund stands next to Richard and Iago. His strong and nimble intellect, his manifest courage, his energy of character, and his noble person, prepare us on our first acquaintance to expect from him not only great undertakings, but great success in them. The circumstances of our first meeting with him, the matter and manner of Gloucester's talk about him and to him, go far to explain his conduct; while the subsequent outleakings of his mind in soliloquy let us into his secret springs of action. With a mixture of guilt, shame, and waggery, his father, before his face, and in the presence of one whose respect he craves, makes him and his birth a theme of gross and wanton discourse; at the same time drawing comparisons between him and "another son some year elder than this," such as could hardly fail at once to wound his pride, to stimulate his ambition, and to awaken his enmity. Thus the kindly influences of human relationship and household ties are turned to their contraries. He feels himself the victim of a disgrace for which he is not to blame; which he cannot hope to outgrow; which no degree of personal worth can efface; and from which he sees no escape but in the pomp and circumstance of worldly power.

Always thinking, too, of his dishonor, he is ever on the watch for signs that others are thinking of it; and the jealousy thence engendered construes every show of respect

into an effort of courtesy, a thing that inflames his ambition while chafing his pride. The corroding suspicion that others are perhaps secretly scorning his noble descent while outwardly acknowledging it, leads him to find or fancy in them a disposition to indemnify themselves for his personal superiority out of his social debasement. The stings of reproach, being personally unmerited, are resented as wrongs; and with the plea of injustice he can easily reconcile his mind to the most wicked schemes. Aware of Edgar's virtues, still he has no relentings, but shrugs his shoulders, and laughs off all compunctions with an "I must"; as if justice to himself were a sufficient excuse for his criminal purposes.

With "the plague of custom" and "the curiosity of nations" Edmund has no compact; he did not consent to them, and therefore holds himself unbound by them. He came into the world in spite of them; perhaps he owes his gifts to a breach of them; may he not, then, seek to thrive by circumventing them? Since his dimensions are so well compact, his mind so generous, and his shape so true, he prefers nature as she has made him to nature as she has placed him, and freely employs the wit she has given, to compass the wealth she has withheld. Thus our free-love philosopher appeals from convention to nature; and, as usually happens in such cases, takes only so much of nature as will serve his turn. For convention itself is a part of nature, it being no less natural that men should grow up together in families and communities than that they should grow up severally as individuals.

There is not in Edmund, as in Iago, any spontaneous or purposeless wickedness. Adventures in crime are not at all his pastime; they are his means, not his end; his instruments,

not his element. He does not so much make war on duty, as bow and shift her off out of the way, that his wit may have free course. He deceives others, indeed, without scruple, but then he does not consider them bound to trust him, and tries to avail himself of their credulity or criminality without becoming responsible for it. He is a pretty bold experimenter, rather radical in his schemes, but this is because he has nothing to lose if he fails, and much to gain if he succeeds. Nor does he attempt to disguise from himself, or gloss over, or anywise palliate, his designs; but boldly confronts and stares them in the face, as though assured of sufficient external grounds to justify or excuse them.

Lear

Lear is perhaps Shakespeare's finest creation in what may be called the art of historical perspective. The old king speaks out from a large fund of vanishing recollections, and in his present we have the odor and efficacy of a remote and varied past. The play forecasts and prepares, from the outset, that superb intellectual ruin where we have "matter and impertinency mix'd, reason in madness"; the earlier transpirations of the character being shaped and ordered with a view to that end. Certain presages and predispositions of insanity are manifest in his behavior from the first, as the joint result of nature, of custom, and of superannuation. We see in him something of constitutional rashness of temper, which, moreover, has long been fostered by the indulgences and flatteries incident to his station, and which, through the cripplings of age, is now working loose from the restraints of his manlier judgment. He has been a wise and good man, strong in reason, in just feeling and

rectitude of purpose, but is now decidedly past his faculties; which, however, as often happens, is unapparent to him save as he feels it in a growing indisposition to the cares and labors of his office. So that there is something of truth in what Goneril says of him; just enough to make her appear the more hateful in speaking of it as she does: "The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look from his age to receive not alone the imperfections of long-engraff'd condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them." [I, i, 288-292.] He is indeed full of inconstant starts and petty gusts of impatience, such as are excusable only in those who have not yet reached, and those who have plainly outlived, the period of discretion and self-restraint.

These growing infirmities of nature and time are viewed by his children with very different feelings. The two elder are inwardly glad of them. They secretly exult in the decays and dilapidations of his manhood as incapacitating him for his office, and so speeding their hopes of the inheritance. They know it is his disease to be gratified with such hollow and hyperbolical soothings as would else be the height of insolence. And so in the name of duty they study to inflame the waywardness that provokes their scorn. They crave reasons for persecuting him, and therefore will say anything, will do anything, to pamper the faults which at once prompt and seem to justify their contempt of him. In a word, it is their pleasure to bring oil to his fire, that he may the sooner be burnt out of their way.

With Cordelia all this is just reversed. The infirmities of a beloved and venerated father are things which she does not willingly see; when she sees, she pities them; and in a true

filial spirit never thinks of them but as a motive to greater tenderness and respect. That his mind is falling out of tune, inspires her with the deeper reverence: she would rather go mad herself than see him do so. Partly from a conscious purpose, but more from an instinct of dutiful affection, she tries to assuage and postpone his distemper with the temperate speech of simple truth; duty and love alike forbidding her to stimulate his disease with the strong waters of fleering and strained hyperbole. Then too a fine moral tact seems to warn her that the medicine of reason must be administered to the dear old man in very gentle doses, else it will but feed his evil. And her treatment is well adapted to keep his faculties in tune, but that her holy purpose is baffled by the fulsome volubility of her sisters.

The first two speeches of the play make clear that the division of the kingdom has already been resolved upon, the terms of the division arranged, and the several portions allotted. This fact is significant, and goes far to interpret the subsequent action, inasmuch as it infers the trial of professions to be but a trick of the king's, designed, perhaps, to surprise his children into expressions which filial modesty would else forbid. Lear has a morbid hungering after the outward tokens of affection; he is not content to know that the heart beats for him, but craves to feel and count over its beatings. The passion is indeed a selfish one, but it is the selfishness of a right-generous and loving nature. Such a diseased longing for sympathy is not the growth of an unsympathizing heart; and Lear naturally looks for the strongest professions where he feels the deepest attachment. "I loved her most, and thought to set my rest on her kind nursery," — such is his declared preference for Cordelia.

And the same thing comes out still more forcibly when, hearing him speak of her as

> Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
> Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
> [I, i, 197–198],

the King of France replies,

> This is most strange,
> That she, that even but now was your best object,
> The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
> Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
> Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
> So many folds of favour! [I, i, 207–212.]

And the same doting fondness that suggested the device makes Lear angry at its defeat; while its success with the first two heightens his irritation at its failure with the third. Thwarted of his hope where he has centred it most and held it surest, his weakness naturally flames out in a transport of rage. Still it is not any doubt of Cordelia's love, but a dotage of his trick that frets and chafes him. For the device is a pet with him. And such a bauble of strategy would have had no place in his thoughts had he been of a temper to bear the breaking of it. Being thus surprised into a tempest of passion, in the disorder of his mind he at once forgets the thousand little daily acts that have insensibly wrought in him to love Cordelia most, and to expect most love from her. His behavior towards her, indeed, is like that of a peevish, fretful child, who, if prevented from kissing his nurse, falls to striking her.

How deeply the old king, in this spasm of wilfulness, violates the cherished order of his feelings, appears in what follows, but especially in his shrinking soreness of mind as

shown when the Fool's grief at the loss of Cordelia is mentioned. The sense of having done her wrong sticks fast in his heart, and will not let him rest. And his remorse on this score renders him the more sensitive to the wrongs that are done him by others. He could better endure the malice of his other daughters, but that it reminds him how deeply he has sinned against her love who has ever approved herself his best. Hence, when Goneril is stinging her ingratitude into him, he exclaims,

> O most small fault,
> How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
> Which like an engine wrench'd my frame of nature
> From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love,
> And added to the gall. [I, iv, 255-259.]

In the delineation of Lear the most impressive thing is the effect and progress of his passion in redeveloping his intellect. For the character seems designed in part to illustrate the power of passion to reawaken and raise the faculties from the tomb in which age has quietly inurned them. And so in Lear we have, as it were, a handful of tumult embosomed in a sea, gradually overspreading and pervading and convulsing the entire mass.

In his conscious fulness of paternal love, Lear confides unreservedly in the piety of his children. The possibility of filial desertion seems never to have entered his thoughts; for so absolute is his trust, that he can hardly admit the evidence of sight against his cherished expectations. Bereft, as he thinks, of one, he clings the closer to the rest, assuring himself that they will spare no pains to make up the loss. Cast off and struck on the heart by another, he flies with still greater confidence to the third. Though proofs that she too

has fallen off are multiplied upon him, still he cannot give her up, cannot be provoked to curse her; he *will* not see, will not own to himself the fact of her revolt.

When, however, the truth is forced home, and he can no longer evade or shuffle off the conviction, the effect is indeed terrible. So long as his heart had something to lay hold of and cling to and rest upon, his mind was the abode of order and peace. But now that his feelings are rendered objectless, torn from their accustomed holdings, and thrown back upon themselves, there springs up a wild chaos of the brain, a whirling tumult and anarchy of the thoughts, which, till imagination has time to work, chokes down his utterance. Then comes the inward, tugging conflict, deep as life, which gradually works up his imaginative forces, and kindles them to a preternatural resplendence. The crushing of his aged spirit brings to light its hidden depths and buried riches. Thus his terrible energy of thought and speech, as soon as imagination rallies to his aid, grows naturally from the struggle of his feelings, — a struggle that seems to wrench his whole being into dislocation, convulsing and upturning his soul from the bottom. Thence proceeds, to quote Hallam, "that splendid madness, not absurdly sudden, as in some tragedies, but in which the strings that keep his reasoning powers together give way one after the other in the frenzy of rage and grief."

In the transition of Lear's mind from its first stillness and repose to its subsequent tempest and storm; in the hurried revulsions and alternations of feeling, — the fast-rooted faith in filial virtue, the keen sensibility to filial ingratitude, the mighty hunger of the heart, thrice repelled, yet ever strengthened by repulse; and in the turning-up of sentiments and

faculties deeply embedded beneath the incrustations of time and place; — in all this we have a retrospect of the aged sufferer's whole life; the abridged history of a mind that has passed through many successive stages, each putting off the form, yet retaining and perfecting the grace of the preceding.

Lear's Insanity

It is significant that experts in mental diseases consult and quote *King Lear* as though it were the history of an actual case of insanity. Essays and treatises on the subject are numerous.[1] That Shakespeare should have entered so perfectly into the consciousness of insanity as thus to project, not a mere likeness of the thing, but the very thing itself, is one of the mysteries of his genius.[2] No philosophy has yet explained or begun to explain the secret of it. To be sure, the same holds true of his other representations of madness; but this of Lear is in some respects the most wonderful of them all, for it is the resurgence of a decayed intellect, with the faculties wrenched into unhingement, and thrown into exorbitancy, by the fearful violence that has evoked them from their repose.

The methods used for the recovery of the old king anticipate those employed as the result of modern scientific study and experience. In a note on the Doctor's reply to

[1] Among noteworthy studies are Bucknill's *The Psychology of Shakespeare*, *Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare*, and *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare* (see notes, I, v, 42; III, vi, 74); Ray's *Contributions to Mental Pathology;* and Stark's *Koenig Lear: eine psychiatrische Shakespeare-Studie.*

[2] In this connection attention has been drawn to the fact that Shakespeare's daughter Susanna married, in 1607, Dr. Hall, a well-known Stratford physician.

Cordelia, IV, iv, 11–15, Dr. Kellogg says[1]: "This reply is significant, and worthy of careful attention, as embracing a brief summary of almost the only two principles recognized by modern science, and now carried out by the most eminent physicians in the treatment of the insane." So again with regard to the Doctor's directions for preventing a relapse, Dr. Brigham remarks[2] that, "although near two centuries and a half have passed since Shakespeare wrote this, we have very little to add to his method of treating the insane as thus pointed out. To produce sleep, to quiet the mind by medical and moral treatment, to avoid all unkindness, and, when the patients begin to convalesce, to guard, as he directs, against everything likely to disturb their minds and cause a relapse, is now considered the best and nearly the only essential treatment."

Cordelia

In the trial of professions, there appears something of obstinacy and sullenness in Cordelia's answer, as if she would resent the old man's credulity to her sisters' lies by refusing to tell him the truth. But, in the first place, she is considerately careful and tender of him; and it is a part of her religion not to feed his dotage with the intoxications for which he has such a morbid craving. She understands thoroughly both his fretful waywardness and their artful hypocrisy; and when she sees how he drinks in the sweetened poison of their speech, she calmly resolves to hazard the worst rather than wrong her own truth to cosset his disease. Thus her answer proceeds, in part, from a deliberate purpose of

[1] *Delineations of Insanity*, New York, 1866.
[2] *Shakespeare's Illustrations of Insanity*.

love, not to compete with them in the utterance of pleasing falsehoods.

In the second place, it is against the original grain of her nature to talk much about what she feels, and what she intends. They love but little who can tell how much they love, or who are fond of prating about it. Love is apt to be tongue-tied, and its best eloquence is when it disables speech. It is the beautiful instinct of true feeling to embody itself sweetly and silently in deeds, lest from showing itself in words it should turn to matter of pride and conceit. A sentimental coxcombry is the natural issue of a cold and hollow heart.

It is not strange, therefore, that Cordelia should make it her part to "love and be silent." Yet she is not one whom it is prudent to trifle with, where her forces are unrestrained by awe of duty. She has indeed a delectable smack of her father's quality, as appears in that glorious flash of womanhood when she so promptly switches off her higgling suitor:

> Peace be with Burgundy!
> Since that respects of fortune are his love,
> I shall not be his wife. [I, i, 241–243.]

Mrs. Jameson rightly says of Cordelia that "everything in her lies beyond our view, and affects us in such a manner that we rather feel than perceive it." And it is very remarkable that, though but little seen and heard, she is nevertheless a sort of ubiquity. All that she utters is but about a hundred lines, yet her speech and presence seem to fill a large part of the play.

It is in this remoteness, this gift of presence without appearance, that the secret of her power mainly consists. Her character has no foreground; she is all perspective,

self-withdrawn, so that she comes to us rather by inspiration than by vision. Even when she is before us we rather feel than see her; so much more being meant than meets the eye, that we almost lose the sense of what is shown, in the interest of what is suggested. Thus she affects us through finer and deeper susceptibilities than consciousness can grasp, as if she at once both used and developed in us higher organs of communication than the senses, or as if her presence acted in some mysterious way directly on our life, so as to be most operative within us when we are least aware of it. The effect is like that of a voice or a song kindling and swelling the thoughts that prevent our listening to it.

What has been said of Cordelia's affection holds true of her character generally. For she has the same deep, quiet reserve of thought as of feeling, so that her mind becomes conspicuous by its retiringness, and draws the attention by shrinking from it. What Cordelia knows is so bound up with her affections that she cannot draw it off into expression by itself; it is held in perfect solution, so to speak, with the other elements of her nature, and nowhere falls down in a sediment, so as to be producible in a separate state. She has a deeper and truer knowledge of her sisters than any one else about them; but she knows them by heart rather than by head, and so can feel and act, but not articulate, a prophecy of what they will do. Ask her, indeed, what she thinks on any subject, and her answer will be that she thinks,—nay, she cannot tell, she can only show you what she thinks. For her thinking involuntarily shapes itself into life, not into speech; and she uses the proper language of her mind when, bending over her "child-changed father," she invokes restoration to "hang his medicine on her lips"; or when, kneeling

before him, she entreats him to "hold his hands in benediction o'er her." She remembers with inexpressible sorrow the curse he had pronounced upon her, — for a father's curse is a dreadful thing to a soul such as hers, — and her first concern is to have that curse replaced with a benediction.

All which shows a peculiar fitness in Cordelia for the part she was designed to act, which was to exemplify the workings of filial piety, as Lear exemplifies those of paternal love. To embody this sentiment, the whole character in all its movements and aspects is made essentially religious. For filial piety is religion acting under the sacredest of human relations; and religion is a life, and not a language; and life is the simultaneous and concurrent action of all the elements of our being. Which is perfectly illustrated in Cordelia, who never thinks of her piety at all, because her piety keeps her thoughts engaged upon her father.

The Fool

There is a strange assemblage of qualities in the Fool, and a strange effect arising from their union and position. It seems hardly possible that Lear's character should be properly developed without him: indeed, he serves as a common gauge and exponent of all the characters about him, — the mirror in which their finest and deepest lineaments are reflected. Though a privileged person, with the largest opportunity of seeing and the largest liberty of speaking, he everywhere turns his privileges into charities, making the immunities of the clown subservient to the noblest sympathies of the man. He is therefore by no means a mere harlequinian appendage of the scene, but moves in vital intercourse with the character and passion of the drama. He makes his

folly the vehicle of truths which Lear will bear in no other shape, while his affectionate tenderness sanctifies all his nonsense. His being heralded by the announcement of his pining away at the banishment of Cordelia sends a consecration before him; that his spirit feeds on her presence hallows everything about him. Lear manifestly loves him, partly for his own sake, and partly for hers: for we feel a delicate, scarce discernible play of sympathy between them on Cordelia's account; the more so, perhaps, that neither of them makes any explicit allusion to her.

How better can the Fool be described than as the soul of pathos in a sort of comic masquerade? — one in whom fun and frolic are sublimed and idealized into tragic beauty; with the garments of mourning showing through and softened by the lawn of playfulness. His "labouring to outjest Lear's heart-struck injuries" tells us that his wits are set a-dancing by grief, that his jests bubble up from the depths of a heart struggling with pity and sorrow, as foam enwreaths the face of deeply troubled waters. So may the lip quiver and the cheek dimple into a smile, to relieve the eye of a burden it was reeling under, yet ashamed to let fall. There is all along a shrinking, velvet-footed delicacy of step in the Fool's antics, as if awed by the holiness of the ground, and he seems bringing diversion to the thoughts, that he may the better steal a sense of woe into the heart. And it is not clear whether the inspired antics that sparkle from the surface of his mind are in more impressive contrast with the dark, tragic scenes into which they are thrown, like rockets into a midnight tempest, or with the undercurrent of deep tragic thoughtfulness out of which they falteringly issue and play. He is deep in the heart of the pathos of the play.

Our estimate of this drama as a whole depends very much on the view we take of the Fool; that is, on how we interpret his part, or in what sense we understand it. Superficially considered, his presence and action can hardly seem other than a blemish in the work, and a hindrance to its proper interest. Accordingly he has been greatly misunderstood, indeed totally misconstrued, by many of Shakespeare's critics. And it must be confessed that the true meaning of his part is somewhat difficult to seize; in fact, is not to be seized at all, unless one get just the right point of view. He has no sufferings of his own to move us, yet, rightly seen, he does move us, and deeply too. But the process of his interest is very peculiar and recondite. The most noteworthy point in him, and the real key to his character, lies in that while his heart is slowly breaking he never speaks, nor even appears so much as to think, of his own suffering. He seems indeed quite unconscious of it. His anguish is purely the anguish of sympathy, — a sympathy so deep and intense as to induce absolute forgetfulness of self, all his capacities of feeling being perfectly engrossed with the sufferings of those whom he loves. He withdraws from the scene with the words, "And I 'll go to bed at noon"; which means simply that the dear fellow is dying, and this, too, purely of others' sorrows, which he feels more keenly than they do themselves. She who was the light of his eyes is gone, dowered with her father's curse and strangered with his oath; Kent and Edgar have vanished from his recognition, he knows not whither, the victims of wrong and crime; the wicked seem to be having all things their own way; the elements have joined their persecutions to the cruelties of men; there is no pity in the heavens, no help from the earth; he sees nothing but

a "world's convention of agonies" before him; and his straining of mind to play assuagement upon others' woes has fairly breached the citadel of his life. But the deepest grief of all has now overtaken him: his old master's wits are shattered. To prevent this, he has been toiling his forces to the utmost; and, now that it has come in spite of him, he no longer has anything to live for. To the last he masks his passion in a characteristic disguise, and he breathes out his life in a play of thought.

Kent and Edgar

If the best grace and happiness of life consist, as this play makes us feel that they do, in a forgetting of self and a living for others, Kent and Edgar are those of Shakespeare's men whom one should most wish to resemble. Strikingly similar in virtues and situation, these two are notwithstanding widely different in character. Brothers in magnanimity and in misfortune; equally invincible in fidelity, the one to his king, the other to his father; both driven to disguise themselves, and in their disguise both serving where they stand condemned; Kent, too generous to control himself, is always quick, fiery, and impetuous; Edgar, controlling himself even because of his generosity, is always calm, collected, and deliberate. For, if Edgar be the more judicious and prudent, Kent is the more unselfish of the two: the former disguising himself for his own safety, and then turning his disguise into an opportunity of service; the latter disguising himself merely in order to serve, and then perilling his life in the same course whereby the other seeks to preserve it. Nor is Edgar so lost to himself and absorbed in others but that he can and does survive them; whereas Kent's life is so bound

up with others, that their death plucks him after. Nevertheless it is hard saying whether one would rather be the subject or the author of Edgar's tale:

> Whilst I was big in clamour, came there a man,
> Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
> Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding
> Who 't was that so endur'd, with his strong arms
> He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
> As he 'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;
> Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him
> That ever ear receiv'd; which in recounting
> His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
> Began to crack. Twice then the trumpets sounded,
> And there I left him tranc'd.
>
> ALBANY. But who was this?
>
> EDGAR. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise
> Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
> Improper for a slave. [V, iii, 208–221.]

It is rather curious to note how the characteristic traits of these two men are preserved even when they are acting most out of character; so that, to us who are in the secret of their course, they are themselves and not themselves at the same time. For example, in Kent's obstreperous railing at the Steward, and his saucy bluntness to Cornwall and Regan, we have a strong relish of the same impulsive and outspoken boldness with which he beards the old king when the latter is storming out his paroxysm against Cordelia, and meets his threats by daring him to the worst: "Do; kill thy physician, and the fee bestow upon the foul disease." Of course, in those transports of abusive speech and of reckless retort, he is but affecting the bully as a part of his disguise; he wants to embroil Lear with his two daughters, and thereby

draw the latter into a speedy disclosure of what he knows to be in their hearts. His big, manly soul is still on fire at the wrong Lear has done to Cordelia, and he would fain hasten that repentance which he knows must sooner or later come; still it is plain enough to us that his tumultuous conduct is but an exaggerated outcome of his native disposition; or, in other words, that he is truly himself all the while, only a good deal more so; a hiding of his character in a sort of overdone caricature. So, too, the imitative limberness and versatility which carry Edgar smoothly through so many abrupt shiftings of his masquerade are in perfect keeping with the cool considerateness which enables him to hold himself so firmly in hand when he goes to assume the style of a wandering Bedlamite. He acts several widely different parts, but the same conscious self-mastery and the same high-souled rectitude of purpose, which form the backbone of his character, are apparent in them all.

In Kent and Oswald we have one of those effective contrasts with which Shakespeare often deepens the harmony of his greater efforts. As Kent is the soul of goodness clothed in the assembled nobilities of manhood, Oswald is the very extract and embodiment of meanness.

XI. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Of all Shakespeare's plays, *King Lear* is the one which, if the qualities of the work and the difficulties of the subject be considered, best illustrates the measure of his genius. It is his masterpiece in a style or order of composition which may be called the Gothic drama, — drama with all the freedom and variety that belong to Gothic architecture, where the

only absolute law is that the parts shall cohere intelligently, and where the more the structure is diversified in form, aspect, purpose, and expression, the grander and more elevating is the harmony resulting from the combination. Shelley held that *King Lear* is the most perfect specimen of dramatic poetry in the world; Dowden, in a notable study of the play, calls it the greatest single achievement in poetry of the Teutonic or northern genius.

There is no end to the riches drawn together in *King Lear*. On attempting to reckon over the parts and particulars severally, one is amazed to find what varied wealth of character, passion, pathos, poetry, and high philosophy is accumulated. Yet there is a place for everything, and everything is in its place. We find nothing but what makes good its right to be where and as it is, so that the accumulation is not more vast and varied in form and matter than it is united and harmonious. An excellent illustration of this is IV, vi, 1–27, the scene of Edgar and the eyeless Gloucester, where the latter imagines himself ascending the chalky cliff at Dover and leaping from it. It is an instance, too, of Shakespeare's power to overcome the inherent incredibility of a thing by his opulence of description. Great as is the miracle of Gloucester's belief, it is authenticated to our feelings by the array of vivid and truthful imagery and the beauty of the detailed representation. (See note, IV, vi, 27.)

Lear's speeches amid the tempest seem spun out of the very nerves and sinews of the storm. It is the instinct of strong passion to lay hold of whatever objects and occurrences lie nearest at hand, and twist itself a language out of them, incorporating itself with their substance, and reproducing them charged with its own life. To Lear, accordingly,

and to us in his presence, the storm becomes all expressive of filial ingratitude; seems spitting its fire, and spouting its water, and hurling its blasts at his old white head. Thus the terrific energies and convulsions of external nature take all their meaning from his mind, and we think of them only as the glad agents or instruments of his daughters' malice, leagued in sympathy with them, and taking their part in the controversy. The fierce warring of the elements around the old king, as if mad with enmity against him, while he seeks shelter in their strife from the tempest within him; the preternatural illumination of his mind when it is on the verge of total overthrow; his gradual settling into that unnatural calmness, which is more appalling than any agitation, because it marks the pause between order gone and anarchy about to begin; the scattering out of the mind's jewels in the mad revel of his unbound and dishevelled faculties, till he finally sinks, broken-hearted and broken-witted, into the sleep of utter prostration; — all this joined to the incessant groanings and howlings of the storm; the wild, inspired babblings of the Fool; the desperate fidelity of Kent, outstripping the malice of the elements with his ministries of love; the bedlamitish jargon of Edgar, whose feigned madness, striking in with Lear's real madness, takes away just enough of its horror, and borrows just enough of its dignity, to keep either from becoming insupportable; — the whole at last dying away into the soft, sweet, solemn discourse of Cordelia, as though the storm had faltered into music at her coming; and winding up with the revival of Lear, his faculties touched into order and peace by the voice of filial sympathy. This is a masterpiece of art, of which every reader must confess the power, though no analysis can ever fathom the secret.

XII. STAGE HISTORY

"The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted," is Lamb's famous dictum, but from the seventeenth century to the present day every eminent actor of tragic drama in the English-speaking world has attempted to interpret on the stage the old king of the three daughters. The play may not have been given as Shakespeare wrote it; it may have been sadly and badly mutilated in nineteenth century as well as in Restoration versions, but the stage history of *King Lear* is a vital part of the history of the serious English drama.

The Seventeenth Century

Of the performance of *King Lear* at court on St. Stephen's night, 1606, as mentioned in *The Stationers' Registers* (see above, Date of Composition), nothing more is known than what is there recorded. The probability is that the original Lear was Richard Burbage (Burbige, Burbadge), the well-known member of the company to which Shakespeare belonged, and famous for his impersonation of Richard III and other great Shakespearian characters. Two elegies on Burbage refer to his being identified with the part of Lear. Collier quotes the following stanza, "copied many years ago from a MS.":

> Thy stature small, but every thought and mood
> Might thoroughly from thy face be understood;
> And his whole action he could change with ease,
> From ancient Leare to youthful Pericles.

Of greater authenticity are the following memorial verses preserved in Folio MS. in the Huth library:

A Funerall Ellegye on y^e^ Death of the famous Actor Richard Burbedg who dyed on Saturday in Lent the 13 March 1618.

hee 's gone & w^th^ him what A world are dead.
which he reviv'd, to be revived soe,
no more young Hamlett, ould Heironymoe
kind Leer, the Greved Moore, and more beside,
that lived in him; have now for ever dy'de.

In his *Roscius Anglicanus*, Downes refers to a performance of *King Lear* at the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre between the Restoration opening in 1662 and the closing by the plague in 1665, and adds quaintly, "as Mr. Shakespear wrote it, before it was altered by Mr. Tate." Of this performance nothing further is known; it may have been that in which one Nokes, "whose face was a comedy, acted," according to Davies, "the Fool to Betterton's Lear." This Betterton was Thomas Betterton, the great Shakespeare actor of the Restoration, whose genius, dignity, and intellectuality enabled him, in spite of marked physical limitations, to hold the stage as the foremost actor of his time for more than half a century. Betterton took the part of Lear in Tate's notorious version of the play (see above, Early Editions), produced at Dorset Garden in 1681, in which the Fool was omitted, Lear restored to the throne, and Edgar and Cordelia happily married! Davies surmises that Betterton was probably glad to get rid of the part of the Fool because of Nokes's success in it. Tate's version dominated all stage productions of the play for upwards of a century and a half.

The Eighteenth Century

Betterton was still taking the part of Lear in Tate's version at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and at a

performance on October 30, 1706, had as Cordelia Mrs. Bracegirdle, the famous rival of Mrs. Oldfield. The old actor died in 1710, and in 1715 London had another popular Lear in Barton Booth, who established a stage tradition in the very rapid delivery of the curse on Goneril. His Cordelia was the beautiful Miss Santlow, afterwards Mrs. Booth. Between 1720 and 1740 Antony Boheme, the sailor-actor, and James Quin both won some distinction in the part of the old king, but David Garrick was the next great Lear. He seems to have taken the part for the first time at Goodman's Fields during the season 1741–1742, and reappeared in it at Drury Lane, with 'Peg' Woffington as Cordelia. At these first performances Tate's version was followed, as it was during Garrick's notable Shakespearian revivals at Covent Garden in 1746, when Richard III and Lear were popularly regarded as his masterpieces. As Lear, Garrick was closely shaven (Macready was the first modern player to give the king a beard) and wore a conventional eighteenth century court dress, with lace cravat, ruffled wrists, silk hose, and buckled shoes. Evidence of the power of his interpretation is abundant. "Why," cried Bannister, "in Lear, Garrick's very stick acted!" Davies records that he "rendered the curse so terribly affecting to the audience, that, during his utterance of it, they seemed to shrink from it as from a blast of lightning." Among Garrick's noteworthy contemporaries there was marked division of opinion over the happy ending business in the play. Samuel Johnson in a general way approved of it; Samuel Richardson, as befitted the author of *Clarissa*, the most tragic novel in the English language, condemned it, as Addison had done earlier in the century.

On February 26, 1756, the handsome Irish actor, Spranger Barry, appeared as Lear at Covent Garden, and the merits of his interpretation as compared with Garrick's became the talk of literary and fashionable London. Then Garrick announced a revival of the play "with restorations from Shakespeare," and this was produced at Drury Lane on October 28 of that year. His original plan was undoubtedly to reintroduce the Fool (Davies says that he designed the part for one Woodward, "who promised to be very chaste in his colouring, and not to counteract the agonies of Lear") and give the play rather as Shakespeare wrote it than as Tate arranged it, but his courage failed and the version produced was really Tate's with a few of Lear's speeches restored, for example, II, iv, 145–149. Then began a war of wits over the rival Lears, and many squibs and epigrams on the exciting situation have survived. This stanza suggests a vital difference between the two interpretations:

> The town has found out different ways
> To praise its different Lears;
> To Barry it gives loud huzzas,
> To Garrick — only tears.

The following has reference to the fine figure of Barry as contrasted with Garrick's short stature:

> A king — nay every inch a king,
> Such Barry doth appear;
> But Garrick 's quite another thing;
> He 's every inch King Lear.

What Garrick had not the courage to do in his 1756 revival of *King Lear* was to a certain extent accomplished by George Colman "the elder," who, influenced by the criticisms of Joseph Warton in *The Adventurer*, set himself "to

purge the tragedy . . . of the alloy of Tate." Colman cut out the love scenes between Cordelia and Edgar, but kept the happy dénouement and, against his better instincts, did not restore the Fool, afraid that such business would "sink into burlesque in the representation and would not be endured on the modern stage." Colman's version was produced at Covent Garden in 1768, Powell acting Lear without a trace of majesty in the part, according to a powerful contemporary criticism. Before the century closed, John Philip Kemble had played Lear to the Cordelia of his sister, Mrs. Siddons, in the Tate version of the play at Drury Lane, and established a new tradition in the interpretation. The Garrick school, according to Mrs. Spranger Barry, was "all rapidity and passion, while the Kemble school was so full of paw and pause that at first the performers, thinking their new competitors had either lost their cues or forgotten their parts, used frequently to prompt them!"

The Nineteenth Century

During the early years of the nineteenth century *King Lear* was little played in England, as Lear's insanity bore too painful a resemblance to the illness of George III; but Kemble took the leading part in a famous performance at Covent Garden in 1808, with his brother Charles acting Edgar. Within a few months of the death of George III, on January 29, 1820, London had again two rival Lears, — Junius Brutus Booth (the elder Booth) at Covent Garden, where he had the notable support of Charles Kemble as Edgar and W. C. Macready as Edmund, and Edmund Kean at Drury Lane, playing the part for the first time. At both performances the Tate version, with slight modifications,

was used. Three years later Edmund Kean revived the play, with the fifth act restored. Still the Tate love scenes were retained and still the Fool was banished. But the wheel of romanticism in literature and in art had come full circle; and when, on January 25, 1838, Macready produced *King Lear*, it was given as Shakespeare left it, for the first time since Tate's version had established itself as the acting edition. It is interesting to read of Macready's anxiety about the part of the Fool, when he was preparing his great production. It was played, as it has been often since, by a young woman. In this connection may be recalled Professor Brandl's theory that the reason why the Fool disappears from the play without warning is that probably the same boy actor originally took the parts of both the Fool and Cordelia.

Later notable revivals of *King Lear* are those when the leading part was taken by Samuel Phelps, Charles Kean, and Henry Irving in England, and by Edwin Forrest and Edwin Booth in America. Of the history of the play outside the English-speaking world, it may be mentioned that it has been performed in Germany since 1626, when the "English Comedians" gave it before the court at Dresden. In Ernesto Rossi and Tommaso Salvini Italy has given the world two of the greatest Lear interpreters; and in the history of the French stage is a long line of notable performances from the *Le Roi Lear*, produced at the Theâtre Français in 1783, to that in 1905, which called forth Maurice Maeterlinck's brilliant appreciation of the greatness of the play in its technique and artistry as well as in its ethical suggestiveness.

AUTHORITIES

(With the more important abbreviations used in the notes)

Q_1 = First or "Pide Bull" Quarto, 1608.
Q_2 = Second Quarto, 1608 (1619?).
Qq = First and Second Quartos.
F_1 = First Folio, 1623.
F_2 = Second Folio, 1632.
F_3 = Third Folio, 1663, 1664.
F_4 = Fourth Folio, 1685.
Ff = all the seventeenth century Folios.
Rowe = Rowe's editions, 1709, 1714.
Pope = Pope's editions, 1723, 1728.
Theobald = Theobald's editions, 1733, 1740.
Hanmer = Hanmer's edition, 1744.
Johnson = Johnson's edition, 1765.
Capell = Capell's edition, 1768.
Malone = Malone's edition, 1790.
Steevens = Steevens's edition, 1793.
Globe = Globe edition (Clark and Wright), 1864.
Dyce = Dyce's (third) edition, 1875.
Clar = Clarendon Press edition (W. A. Wright), 1877.
Delius = Delius's (fifth) edition, 1882.
Camb = Cambridge (third) edition (W. A. Wright), 1891.
Furness = H. H. Furness's *New Variorum* edition, 1880.
Verity = A. W. Verity's Pitt Press edition, 1897.
Gollancz = Israel Gollancz's *The Temple Shakespeare.*
Craig = W. J. Craig's Arden edition, Methuen.
Herford = C. H. Herford's *The Eversley Shakespeare.*
Abbott = E. A. Abbott's *A Shakespearian Grammar.*
Fleay = F. G. Fleay's *Shakespeare Manual.*
Boas = F. S. Boas's *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*, 1896.
Harsnet = Harsnet's *Declaration, etc.*, 1603.
Cotgrave = Cotgrave's *Dictionarie*, 1611.
Bradley = A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy.*
Schmidt = Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon.*
Skeat = Skeat's *An Etymological Dictionary.*
Murray = *A New English Dictionary* (*The Oxford Dictionary*).
Century = *The Century Dictionary.*

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART

Except in the case of Shakespeare's plays (see note) the literature dates refer to first publication

Year	Shakespeare: Biography; Poems	Shakespeare: Plays	British and Foreign Literature	History and Biography
1564	Birth. Baptism, April 26, Stratford-on-Avon		**Quart livre de Pantagruel**	Michelangelo died. Calvin died. Marlowe born. Galileo born
1565	Father became alderman		Sackville and Norton's **Gorboduc** printed	Philip II of Spain gave his name to Philippine Islands
1566	Brother Gilbert born		Udall's **Roister Doister** printed?	Murder of Rizzio
1568	Father, as bailiff of Stratford, entertained Queen's and Earl of Worcester's actors	**Note.** The plays in the columns below are arranged in the probable, though purely conjectural, order of composition. Dates appended to plays are those of first publication. Where no date is given, the play was first published in the First Folio (1623). M signifies that the play was mentioned by Meres in the **Palladis Tamia** (1598)	The Bishops Bible. La Taille's **Saülle Furieux**. R. Grafton's **Chronicle**	Mary of Scots a prisoner in England. Ascham died. Coverdale died. Netherlands War of Liberation
1572			Camoens' **Os Lusiadas** (The Lusiads)	Knox died. Massacre of St. Bartholomew
1573			Tasso's **Aminta**	Ben Jonson born? Donne born
1574	Brother Richard born		**Mirror for Magistrates** (third edition)	Earl of Leicester's players licensed
1575			**Gammer Gurton's Needle**. Golding's Ovid (complete)	Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth. Palissy lectured on Natural History
1576			**The Paradise of Dainty Devices**. Gascoigne's **Steel Glass**	"The Theatre" opened in Finsbury Fields, London, followed by "The Curtain." Hans Sachs died
1577	Father in financial difficulties		Holinshed's **Chronicle**	Drake sailed to circumnavigate globe

1579	Sister Ann died (aged eight)				Gosson's **School of Abuse.** North's Plutarch. Lyly's **Euphues** (pt. 1). Spenser's **Shepherd's Calendar**	Union of Utrecht. Tasso put in confinement at Ferrara
1580	Brother Edmund born				Montaigne's **Essais** (first edition)	Brown founded Separatists. Camoens died
1581					Tasso's **Gerusalemme Liberata**	Dutch Declaration of Independence
1582	Married Anne Hathaway				The Rheims New Testament	Accademia della Crusca founded
1583	Daughter Susanna born				Garnier's **Les Juives**	Sir Humphrey Gilbert drowned
1584					Lyly's **Campaspe.** Peele's **Arraignment of Paris**	William the Silent assassinated. Ivan the Terrible died
1585	Twin children (Hamnet, Judith) born				Guarini's **Pastor Fido** (1590)	Ronsard died
1586	Probably went to London				Camden's **Britannia**	Sir Philip Sidney killed
1587					Hakluyt's **Four Voyages. Faustbuch** (Spiess, Frankfort)	Execution of Mary of Scots
1588					**Martin Marprelate: The Epistle**	Defeat of Spanish Armada
1589		COMEDIES	HISTORIES	TRAGEDIES	Puttenham's **Art of English Poesie**	Henry of Navarre, King of France. Palissy died in Bastille
1590		**Love's Labour's Lost** (M, 1598)			Marlowe's **Tamburlaine.** Spenser's **Faerie Queene,** I–III. Lodge's **Rosalynde.** Sidney's **Arcadia**	Battle of Ivry
1591		**Comedy of Errors** (M)	**1 Henry VI** **2 Henry VI**		Sidney's **Astrophel and Stella.** Harington's tr. of **Orlando Furioso**	Herrick born

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART (CONTINUED)

YEAR	SHAKESPEARE				BRITISH AND FOREIGN LITERATURE	HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
	BIOGRAPHY; POEMS	PLAYS (see note above)				
1592	Greene's attack in **Groatsworth of Wit**	**Two Gentlemen of Verona** (M)	**Richard III** (M, 1597). **3 Henry VI**	**Romeo and Juliet** (M, 1597)	Daniel's **Delia**. Lyly's **Gallathea** (Galatea)	Greene died. Montaigne died. London theatres closed through plague
1593	**Venus and Adonis** (seven editions, 1593–1602)		**King John** (M). **Richard II** (M, 1597)	**Titus Andronicus** (M, 1594)	Peele's **Edward I.** Barnes's **Sonnets**	Marlowe died. Herbert born
1594	**Lucrece** (five editions, 1594–1616)	**A Midsummer Night's Dream** (M, 1600)			Rinuccini's **Dafne. Satire Ménipée**	Palestrina ("Princeps Musicæ") died
1595	Valuable contemporary references to Shakespeare	**All 's Well that Ends Well. Taming of the Shrew**			Peele's **Old Wives' Tale.** Spenser's **Epithalamion**	Tasso died. Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition to Guiana. Sir J. Hawkins died
1596	Son Hamnet died. Family applied for coat-of-arms		**1 Henry IV** (M, 1598). **2 Henry IV** (1600)		Drayton's **Mortimeriados. Faerie Queene,** Books IV–VI	Burbage built Blackfriar's Theatre. Descartes born. Sir F. Drake died
1597	Purchased New Place, Stratford	**Merry Wives of Windsor. Merchant of Venice** (M, 1600)			Bacon's **Essays** (first edition). Hall's **Virgidemiarum**	The Tyrone rebellion
1598	Shakespeare acted in Jonson's **Every Man in His Humour**	**Much Ado About Nothing** (1600)	**Henry V** (1600)		Meres's **Palladis Tamia.** Chapman's Homer (pt. 1). Lope de Vega's **Arcadia**	Peele died. Edict of Nantes
1599	Part proprietor of Globe Theatre. Coat-of-arms granted. **The Passionate Pilgrim**	**As You Like It**			Aleman's **Guzman de Alfarache.** Peele's **David and Bethsabe**	Spenser died. Globe Theatre built. Oliver Cromwell born
1600	**Won a London lawsuit**	**Twelfth Night**			**England's Helicon**	Calderon born. Bruno died

1601	Father died. **The Phœnix and Turtle**			**Julius Cæsar**	Jonson's **Poetaster**	**The Essex plot. Rivalry between London adult and boy actors**
1602	Purchased more Stratford real estate			**Hamlet** (1603)	**Dekker's Satiromastix**	**Bodleian Library founded**
1603	His company acted before the Queen	**Troilus and Cressida** (1609)			**Jonson's Sejanus**	**Queen Elizabeth died. Millenary Petition**
1604	Sued Rogers at Stratford	**Measure for Measure**		**Othello**	Marlowe's **Faustus** (1588–1589)	**Hampton Court Conference**
1605	Godfather to William D'Avenant			**Macbeth**	**Don Quixote** (pt. 1)	**Gunpowder plot. Sir Thomas Browne born**
1606	**King Lear** given before Court			**King Lear** (1608)	Chapman's **Monsieur D'Olive**	**Lyly died. Corneille born**
1607	Daughter Susanna married Dr. Hall			**Timon of Athens**	Dekker and Webster's **Westward Ho!**	**Settlement of Jamestown**
1608	Birth of granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall. Death of mother (Mary Arden)	**Pericles** (1609)		**Antony and Cleopatra**	Captain John Smith's **A True Relation.** Middleton's **A Mad World**	**Milton born. Quebec founded**
1609	**Sonnets. A Lover's Complaint**			**Coriolanus**	The Douai Old Testament	**Separatists (Pilgrims) in Leyden**
1610	Purchased more real estate	**Cymbeline**			Strachey's **Wracke and Redemption**	**Henry IV (Navarre) assassinated**
1611	Subscribed for better highways	**Winter's Tale** **The Tempest**			King James Bible (A.V.). Bellarmine's **Puissance du Pape**	**Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden**
1613	Invested in London house property. Brother Richard died		**Henry VIII**		Drayton's **Polyolbion**	**Globe Theatre burned**
1616	Made his will. Daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney. Died April 23 (May 3, New Style)				Captain John Smith's **New England.** Folio edition of Jonson's Poems. D'Aubigné's **Les Tragiques** (1577)	**Cervantes died. Beaumont died. Baffin explores Baffin's Bay. Harvey lectured on the circulation of the blood**

DISTRIBUTION OF CHARACTERS

In this analysis are shown the acts and scenes in which the characters (see Dramatis Personæ, page 2) appear, with the number of speeches and lines given to each.

NOTE. Parts of lines are counted as whole lines.

		NO. OF SPEECHES	NO. OF LINES
LEAR	I, i	24	122
	I, iv	43	118
	I, v	14	20
	II, iv	35	161
	III, ii	6	30
	III, iv	18	58
	III, vi	10	29
	IV, vi	17	80
	IV, vii	8	32
	V, iii	13	54
		188	704
KING OF FRANCE	I, i	5	32
BURGUNDY	I, i	5	12
CORNWALL	I, i	1	1
	II, i	5	14
	II, ii	16	32
	II, iv	10	12
	III, v	5	11
	III, vii	16	37
		53	107
ALBANY	I, i	1	1
	I, iv	8	11
	IV, ii	11	43
	V, i	6	14
	V, iii	32	84
		58	153
KENT	I, i	12	42
	I, iv	15	33
	I, v	1	2
	II, ii	25	94
	II, iv	12	32
	III, i	6	41
	III, ii	3	17
	III, iv	14	18
	III, vi	6	13
	IV, iii	11	29
	IV, vii	8	16
	V, iii	13	24
		126	361
GLOUCESTER	I, i	7	18
	I, ii	15	53
	II, i	13	30
	II, ii	5	14
	II, iv	7	12
	III, iii	2	17
	III, iv	8	23
	III, vi	4	15
	III, vii	11	33
	IV, i	12	44
	IV, vi	30	63
	V, ii	3	3
		117	325
EDGAR	I, ii	9	10
	II, i	1	1
	II, iii	1	21
	III, iv	12	59
	III, vi	8	42
	IV, i	9	31
	IV, vi	31	107
	V, i	3	12
	V, ii	3	10
	V, iii	19[1]	83
		96	376

[1] As to whether the last speech of the play should be given to Edgar or to Albany, see note, V, iii, 323–326.

		NO. OF SPEECHES	NO. OF LINES
EDMUND	I, i	3	3
	I, ii	25	100
	II, i	14	64
	II, ii	1	1
	III, iii	2	6
	III, v	4	12
	IV, ii	1	1
	V, i	10	31
	V, iii	20	73
		80	291
CURAN	II, i	4	9
OLD MAN	IV, i	9	11
DOCTOR	IV, iv	1	5
	IV, vii	7	13
		8	18
FOOL	I, iv	22	96
	I, v	12	23
	II, iv	6	31
	III, ii	5	31
	III, iv	5	10
	III, vi	7	13
		57	204
OSWALD	I, iii	3	3
	I, iv	5	6
	II, ii	13	24
	III, vii	1	6
	IV, ii	2	10
	IV, v	9	12
	IV, vi	5	16
		38	77
CAPTAIN	V, iii	5	6
GENTLEMAN	I, v	1	1
	II, iv	2	5
	III, i	5	17
	IV, iii	10	32
	IV, vi	9	16
	IV, vii	5	9
	V, iii	3	5
		35	85
HERALD	V, iii	4	9
1 SERVANT	III, vii	3	5
2 SERVANT	III, vii	2	5
3 SERVANT	III, vii	2	5
KNIGHT	I, iv	5	13
MESSENGER	IV, ii	6	17
	IV, iv	1	2
		7	19
GONERIL	I, i	7	28
	I, iii	4	25
	I, iv	11	67
	II, iv	7	15
	III, vii	2	2
	IV, ii	9	39
	V, i	4	7
	V, iii	7	14
		51	197
REGAN	I, i	6	16
	II, i	5	23
	II, ii	4	7
	II, iv	18	59
	III, vii	13	18
	IV, v	10	33
	V, i	8	14
	V, iii	7	18
		71	188
CORDELIA	I, i	12	46
	IV, iv	3	24
	IV, vii	15	40
	V, iii	1	5
		31	115

THE TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ[1]

LEAR, King of Britain
KING OF FRANCE
DUKE OF BURGUNDY
DUKE OF CORNWALL
DUKE OF ALBANY
EARL OF KENT
EARL OF GLOUCESTER[2]
EDGAR, son to Gloucester
EDMUND, bastard son to Gloucester
CURAN, a courtier
Old Man, tenant to Gloucester
Doctor
Fool
OSWALD, steward to Goneril
A Captain employed by Edmund
Gentleman attendant on Cordelia
A Herald
Servants to Cornwall[3]
GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA } daughters to Lear

Knights of Lear's train, Captains, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants

SCENE: *Britain*

[1] Not in Quartos or Folios. Rowe was the first to give a list of the characters; and his list, with additions by Malone, is followed substantially in modern editions.

[2] The Folios occasionally have 'Gloster,' and this phonetic spelling, occasionally in the form 'Glo'ster,' is adopted in many modern editions.

[3] Here Capell has, "Servants to Cornwall, three. Officers in the Troop of Albany, four. Messengers, two."

ACT I

Scene I. King Lear's *palace*

Enter Kent, Gloucester, *and* Edmund

Kent. I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Gloucester. It did always seem so to us: but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for qualities are so weigh'd that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety. 6

King Lear's *palace* | QqFf omit. — Edmund | Bastard Qq.
4. **kingdom** Ff | kingdomes Qq.
5. **qualities** Ff | equalities Qq.

ACT I. Scene I. In the Folios, not in the Quartos, the play is divided into acts and scenes, which are given with Latin nomenclature. The Folio division is followed in this edition, except in Acts II and IV, where the variations are indicated in the notes.

1. **affected**: inclined to, favored (with the sense of 'affection'). Cf. *1 Henry VI*, V, v, 57; *Twelfth Night*, II, v, 28.

5–6. **qualities . . . moiety**: values are so evenly balanced that close scrutiny of either share cannot make either of the dukes prefer the other's portion to his own. 'Moiety,' properly 'a half,' is used by Shakespeare in the sense of 'any portion.' "It may be in the present passage [that] the word is used in its literal sense."—Clar. This speech goes far to interpret Lear's subsequent action, as it shows that the division of the kingdom has already been concluded, and the several portions allotted, and so infers the trial of professions to be a sort of pet device with the old king, a thing that has no purpose but to gratify a childish whim. The opening thus forecasts Lear's madness.

KENT. Is not this your son, my lord?

GLOUCESTER. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge; I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am braz'd to 't. Do you smell a fault?

KENT. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

GLOUCESTER. But I have a son, sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account; though this knave came something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

EDMUND. No, my lord.

GLOUCESTER. My lord of Kent. Remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

EDMUND. My services to your lordship.

KENT. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

EDMUND. Sir, I shall study deserving.

GLOUCESTER. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. The king is coming.

13. **a son, sir** Ff | sir a sonne Qq.

10. **braz'd**: brazened, hardened. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, iv, 37.

12. **proper**: handsome, good-looking. Cf. *Othello*, IV, iii, 35.

14. **account**: estimation. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 157.

24–25. As Edmund's villainy is a leading force in the dramatic action, an intimation of the causes which have been at work preparing him for crime is judiciously given here in the outset of the play. Gloucester's meaning in this last speech clearly is, that he has kept Edmund away from home nine years, and intends sending him away again, in order to avoid the shame of his presence, or because he has "so often blush'd to acknowledge him." 'Out' suggests that Edmund's absence had been spent in travelling abroad, or in pursuing his studies, or in some kind of foreign service. This accounts for his not being acquainted with Kent.

Sennet. Enter one bearing a coronet, KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, *and* Attendants

LEAR. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

GLOUCESTER. I shall, my liege.

[*Exeunt* GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND]

LEAR. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.
Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom; and 't is our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters,

26. *Enter . . . coronet* Qq | Ff omit. — Scene II Pope.
28. **liege** Qq | lord Ff. — [*Exeunt* GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND] Capell | Exit **Ff** | Qq omit.
30. **Give me the** Ff | The Qq. — **Know that** Ff | Know Qq.
32. **from our age** | of our state Qq.
33. **Conferring** | Confirming Qq.
33-38. **while . . . now** Ff | Qq omit.

26. *Sennet.* A term common in Elizabethan stage directions to describe a set of notes on a trumpet sounded as a signal of entrance or departure. It is etymologically of uncertain origin, but is probably connected with old Fr. *signet*, Lat. *signum*. Cf. 'signature' in musical notation.

29. Lear's "darker purpose" is probably that of surprising his daughters into a rivalry of affection. His scheme of dividing the kingdom had already been made known.

36. **constant will**: determined purpose. Cf. 'fast intent,' line 31.

Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

GONERIL. Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valu'd, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

CORDELIA. [*Aside*] What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.

LEAR. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

42-43. **Since . . . state** | Qq omit.
46. **nature . . . challenge** Ff | merit doth most challenge it Qq.
48. **I love** Ff | I do loue Qq. — **words** Qq | word Ff.
55. [*Aside*] Pope | QqFf omit. — **do** Qq | speak Ff.
57-58. **and . . . rivers** Ff | Qq omit.
59. **issue** Qq | issues Ff.
61. **to** | of Ff. — **Speak** | Ff omit.

46. Either (1) where natural affection justly claims it as due; or (2) where the claim of merit is added to that of birth.

48. **wield the matter**: express. 'Wield' suggests weight.

54. **Beyond . . . much.** "Beyond all assignable quantity." — Johnson. "Beyond all these comparisons by which Goneril sought to measure her love." — Clar.

REGAN. I am made of that self metal as my sister,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short, that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys,
Which the most precious square of sense possesses;
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.
CORDELIA. [*Aside*] Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love 's
More ponderous than my tongue.
LEAR. To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least, to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy

62. **I** Ff | Sir, I Qq. — **that self metal** | that selfe-mettle F_1 | the selfe same mettall Q_1 | the selfe-same mettal Q_2. — **as my sister** Ff | that my sister is Qq.
67. **possesses** Qq | professes Ff.
69. [*Aside*] Pope | QqFf omit.
71. **ponderous** Ff | richer Qq.
75. **conferr'd** Ff | confirm'd Qq.
76. **the last, not** Qq | our last and Ff | our last, not Pope.
77-78. **The vines . . . be interess'd** | Qq omit. — **interess'd** Jennens | interest Ff.

62. **self**: same. Cf. IV, iii, 34; *The Comedy of Errors*, V, i, 10.

65. **too short, that**: short of me in that. See Abbott, § 284.

67. **square of sense**: fullness of sensibility, capacity of joy. The whole line may be interpreted, Which the finest susceptibility of happiness is capable of.

68. **felicitate**: made happy. See Abbott, § 342.

74. **validity**: worth, value. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 199.

76. Grant White defends the Folio reading, "our last and least," as containing a happy allusion to the personal traits and family position of Cordelia.

Strive to be interess'd, what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.
CORDELIA. Nothing, my lord.
LEAR. Nothing!
CORDELIA. Nothing.
LEAR. Nothing will come of nothing; speak again.
CORDELIA. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more nor less.
LEAR. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,
Lest you may mar your fortunes.
CORDELIA. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me; I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.

78. **draw** Ff | win Qq.
86. **nor more** Qq Globe Camb Delius | no more Ff Furness.
88. **you** Ff | it Qq.
93. **Haply** Q_2 | Happely Q_1 | Happily Ff.

78. **interess'd**: interested, concerned. Holinshed uses 'to be interessed' in the sense of 'to have a right or share.' See Murray. Schmidt supports the Folio 'interest' as being the contracted past participle 'interested.'

85. 'Majesty' here and elsewhere in the play is dissyllabic.

86. **bond**: duty, obligation. Cf. the expression 'bounden duty.'

90. 'As' should probably be construed as a relative pronoun in the sense of 'which.' Abbott, § 384, interprets thus: "Return those duties back *as* (they) are most fit (to be returned)." Moberly held that the plural 'are' is used by attraction to 'duties,' and that the phrase should read 'as is right fit.'

Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.
LEAR. But goes thy heart with this?
CORDELIA. Ay, my good lord.
LEAR. So young, and so untender?
CORDELIA. So young, my lord, and true.
LEAR. Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower:
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate and the night,
By all the operation of the orbs
From whom we do exist and cease to be,
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,
As thou my sometime daughter.
KENT. Good my liege,—
LEAR. Peace, Kent!
Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest

97. **To . . . all** Qq | Ff omit.
98. **my good** Ff | good my Qq.
103. **mysteries** $F_2F_3F_4$ | mistresse Qq | miseries F_1.

103. **Hecate**: queen of Hades, the patroness of all infernal arts. The name is properly trisyllabic, but Shakespeare always has it dissyllabic, except in *1 Henry VI*, III, ii, 64.

110. **makes his generation messes**: devours his children.

116. **set my rest**: stake my all. The figure is from the game of primero. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, II, ii, 110; *Romeo and Juliet* V, iii, 110. The phrase usually involves the literal meaning.

On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!
So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her! Call France. Who stirs?
Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third.
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain
The name, and all th' additions to a king;
The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours; which to confirm,
This coronet part betwixt you.

KENT. Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,

121. **this** Qq | the Ff.
123. **with** Ff | in Qq.
128. **turn** F_3F_4 | turne F_1F_2 | turnes Qq. — **shall** Ff | still Qq.
129. **additions** Qq | addition Ff.
132. **betwixt** Qq | between Ff.

117. **Hence . . . sight!** Is this angry order addressed to Cordelia or to Kent? That Cordelia is addressed gives the more effective dramatic interpretation, but is inconsistent with what follows. In defence of the words being addressed to Kent, as he has said nothing to provoke the outburst, it may be supposed that Lear, knowing his man, anticipates a bold remonstrance from him. Cf. line 150, "Out of my sight!"

129. **additions**: titles and external observances. Cf. II, ii, 20.

130. In Shakespeare are the two pronunciations, 'rev'enue' and 'reven'ue,' the latter an old Parliamentary usage followed by Gladstone (cf. II, i, 100). Here scansion requires 'rev'nue,' a dissyllable, and 'ex'cution,' a trisyllable.

Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers, —
LEAR. The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.
KENT. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart! Be Kent unmannerly,
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour 's bound,
When majesty falls to folly. Reverse thy doom,
And in thy best consideration check
This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.
LEAR. Kent, on thy life, no more.
KENT. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.
LEAR. Out of my sight!
KENT. See better, Lear; and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.

139. **mad** Q_2Ff | man Q_1.—**wouldst** F_4 | wouldest F_1 | wilt Qq.
142. **falls** F_1F_2 | stoops Qq. — **Reverse thy doom** Qq Globe | Reserve thy state Ff Delius Furness.
146, 147. **sound Reverbs** Qq | sounds Reverbe Ff.
148. **as a** $QqF_2F_3F_4$ | as F_1.
149. **nor** Qq | nere F_1F_2.
150. **the motive** Qq | motive Ff.

139. "Seeing his master put his hand to his sword." — Capell.
144. **Answer . . . judgment.** "Let my life be answerable for my judgment; or, I will stake my life on my opinion." — Johnson.
147. **Reverbs**: reverberates. Probably a Shakespearian coinage.
149. **wage**: stake as in a wager. Cf. *Cymbeline*, I, iv, 144.
152. The mark to direct your sight that you err not. The 'blank' is literally the white spot in the centre of a target.

LEAR. Now, by Apollo, —
KENT. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.
LEAR. O, vassal, miscreant!
[*Laying his hand on his sword*]
ALBANY. CORNWALL. Dear sir, forbear.
KENT. Do;
Kill thy physician, and thy fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I 'll tell thee thou dost evil.
LEAR. Hear me, recreant!
On thine allegiance, hear me!
That thou hast sought to make us break our vows,
Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride
To come betwixt our sentence and our power,
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world,
And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back

154. [*Laying . . . sword*] Rowe.
156. **Do** Qq | Ff omit.
157. **thy fee** Ff | the fee Qq.
158. **gift** F_2 | guift F_1 | doome Qq.
162. **That** Ff | Since Qq.
164. **betwixt** Ff | betweene Qq.
— **sentence** Qq | sentences F_1.
167. **Five** Ff | Foure Qq.
168. **diseases** Qq | disasters Ff.
169. **sixth** | sixt F_1 | fift Qq.

162. **That**: in that, for that, because. See Abbott, § 284.

166. **potency made good**: royal authority being maintained.

168. **diseases**: discomforts, inconveniences. The etymological sense. Cf. 'disease,' meaning 'to trouble,' in *Coriolanus*, I, iii, 117. "The alteration of the Folios was made by the printer in consequence of his not knowing the meaning of the original word." — Malone.

Upon our kingdom; if, on the tenth day following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away! by Jupiter,
This shall not be revok'd.

KENT. Fare thee well, king! Sith thus thou wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.
[*To* CORDELIA] The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said!
[*To* REGAN *and* GONERIL] And your large speeches may your deeds approve,
That good effects may spring from words of love.
Thus Kent, O princes! bids you all adieu;
He 'll shape his old course in a country new. [*Exit*]

Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER, *with* FRANCE, BURGUNDY, *and* Attendants

GLOUCESTER. Here 's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

LEAR. My lord of Burgundy,
We first address toward you, who with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter; what, in the least,
Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

174. **Sith** Ff | since Qq.
176, 178. [*To* . . . Hanmer | QqFf omit.
177. **justly** Ff | rightly Qq. — **rightly** Ff | iustly Qq.
182. Scene III Pope.—GLOUCESTER | Glost. Q1 | Glo. Q2 | Cor. Ff.
184. **toward** Ff | towards Qq.

178. **approve**: make good, prove true. Cf. II, ii, 152.

Flourish. Another term common to Elizabethan stage directions. It signified a fanfare of trumpets or horns, to herald the approach of some person of note.

BURGUNDY. Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than what your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.
LEAR. Right-noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fallen. Sir, there she stands.
If aught within that little seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
She 's there, and she is yours.
BURGUNDY. I know no answer.
LEAR. Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?
BURGUNDY. Pardon me, royal sir;
Election makes not up on such conditions.
LEAR. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made me,
I tell you all her wealth. [*To* FRANCE] For you, great king,
I would not from your love make such a stray,
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you

188. **what** QqF3F4 | hath F1F2. F2F3F4 | Couered Qq.
198. **Dower'd** | Dow'rd F1 | Dowr'd 200. **up on** Qq | vp in Ff.

192. **seeming.** Among the interpretations offered are, 'beautiful' (Johnson); 'specious' (Steevens); 'in appearance' (Clar). Schmidt suggests that 'seeming' should be taken as a gerund, and thus 'seeming substance' would mean a creature whose reality is mere show or seeming. Some editors, following Collier, print 'little-seeming.'

193. **piec'd**: supplemented. Cf. 'piec'd out,' III, vi, 2.

196. **owes**: owns, possesses. Used in modern sense, III, iv, 95.

204. **To**: as to. See Abbott, § 281. — **beseech.** Cf. 'prithee.'

T' avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is asham'd
Almost t' acknowledge hers.

FRANCE. This is most strange,
That she, that even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favour! Sure, her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fallen into taint; which to believe of her,
Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Should never plant in me.

CORDELIA. I yet beseech your majesty, —
If for I want that glib and oily art,
To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,
I 'll do 't before I speak, — that you make known
It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour;

208. **that** Qq | whom F1 | who F2. — **best** | F1 omits.
210. **Most best, most** Qq | The best, the Ff.
215. **Fallen** | Falne Qq | Fall Ff.
219. **well** Qq | will Ff.

212–215. **her offence . . . into taint.** Malone interprets: "Either her offence must be monstrous, or if she has not committed any such offence, the affection you always professed to have for her must be tainted and decayed." Craig, taking 'or' in the sense of 'ere' (see Abbott, § 131), interprets: "She must surely have committed some unspeakably horrid act, ere the warm affection you always professed to hold her in, should thus suddenly have changed to hate."

218. **If for I want:** if it is because I lack. See Abbott, § 387.

But even for want of that for which I am richer,
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
That I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

LEAR. Better thou
Hadst not been born than not t' have pleas'd me better.

FRANCE. Is it but this, — a tardiness in nature
Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love 's not love
When it is mingled with regards that stands
Aloof from th' entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

BURGUNDY. Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

LEAR. Nothing. I have sworn; I am firm.

BURGUNDY. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father
That you must lose a husband.

CORDELIA. Peace be with Burgundy!

226. **That** Ff | As Qq.
227. **Better** Ff | Goe to, goe to, better Q_1 | Go to, goe to, better Q_2.
233. **regards** Ff | respects Qq. — **stands** Q_2Ff | stand Pope.
235. **Lear** Q_2 | Leir Q_1 | King Ff.

225. **still-soliciting**: ever-begging. Cf. "the still-vex'd Bermoothes," *The Tempest*, I, ii, 229; "still-closing waters," ibid. III, iii, 64.

232–234. **Love 's not love . . .** Cf. *Sonnets*, CXVI, 2–4:

> Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove.

233. **regards**: considerations. Similarly 'respects,' line 242.

234. **th' entire point**: that which is essential.

Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

FRANCE. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor,
Most choice, forsaken, and most lov'd, despis'd!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon;
Be it lawful I take up what 's cast away.
Gods, gods! 't is strange that from their cold'st neglect
My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.
Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
Can buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind;
Thou losest here, a better where to find.

LEAR. Thou hast her, France; let her be thine, for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again. Therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.
Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish. Exeunt all but* FRANCE, GONERIL, REGAN, *and* CORDELIA]

FRANCE. Bid farewell to your sisters.

CORDELIA. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are,

242. **respects of fortune** Qq | respect and fortunes Ff.
253. **Can** Ff | Shall Qq.
254, 255. **unkind; Thou** | unkinde, Thou Ff | vnkind Thou Qq.
260. *Exeunt* . . . CORDELIA | Exeunt Ff.
261. Scene IV Pope.
262. **The jewels** QqFf | Ye jewels Rowe.

252. **waterish**: well-watered. Here used contemptuously.
253. **unpriz'd**. It connotes here the two opposed meanings, (1) 'not valued' by others, and (2) 'beyond price.'

And, like a sister, am most loth to call
Your faults as they are nam'd. Love well our father;
To your professed bosoms I commit him;
But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So, farewell to you both.

REGAN. Prescribe not us our duties.

GONERIL. Let your study
Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

CORDELIA. Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides;
Who covers faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper!

FRANCE. Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt* FRANCE *and* CORDELIA]

GONERIL. Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most nearly appertains to us both. I think our father will hence to-night.

270. **duties** Qq | dutie F1 | duty F2.
273. **the want** Ff | the worth Qq.
274. **plighted** Ff | pleated Qq.
275. **covers** QqFf. — **shame them derides** Qq | with shame derides Ff.
276. [*Exeunt* . . . | Exit . . . QqF1.

266. **professed**: full of professions. Passive form with active sense.

273. "You well deserve to meet with that want of love from your husband, which you have professed to want for our father." — Theobald. Some interpret 'the want' as referring to the lost share of the kingdom.

274. **plighted**: folded, dissembling. Spenser has "with many a folded plight," *The Faerie Queene*, II, iii, 26. "The word is really misspelt . . . and should be *plite*, without *gh*. Chaucer has the verb *pliten*, 'to fold,' *Troilus*, ii, 697, 1204. It is clearly a mere variant of 'plait,' or 'pleat,' though the vowel is difficult to account for." — Skeat. Pope read 'plaited'; Malone once conjectured 'plated.'

REGAN. That 's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

GONERIL. You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little. He always lov'd our sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

REGAN. 'T is the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

GONERIL. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look from his age to receive not alone the imperfections of long-engraff'd condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

REGAN. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

GONERIL. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let us hit together; if our father carry authority with such disposition as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

REGAN. We shall further think of it.

GONERIL. We must do something, and i' th' heat.

[*Exeunt*]

283. **not been** Qq | beene Ff.
289. **from his age to receive** Ff | to receive from his age Qq.
290. **-engraff'd** | ingraffed F_1F_2 | engraffed F_3F_4 | ingrafted Qq.
296. **Pray you** Ff | pray Qq.—**hit** Qq | sit Ff.
297. **disposition** Ff Furness | dispositions Qq Globe.
299. **of it** Ff | on 't Qq.

290. **long-engraff'd condition**: "qualities of mind confirmed by long habit." — Malone.

296. **hit**: agree. Schmidt adopts the Folio 'sit,' in the sense of 'hold a session,' 'take counsel,' quoting *Twelfth Night*, I, v, 143; *Hamlet*, V, i, 4; *Henry V*, V, ii, 80; *Richard III*, III, i, 173; *Pericles*, II, iii, 92.

300. **i' th' heat**: at once, "while the iron is hot."

SCENE II. *The Earl of* GLOUCESTER'S *castle*

Enter EDMUND, *with a letter*

EDMUND. Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to th' legitimate: fine word, — legitimate!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base

SCENE II | Rowe omits | Scene VI Pope. — *The Earl . . . castle* | QqFf omit. — *Enter . . . letter* Theobald | Enter Bastard Ff.

SCENE II. Eccles holds that this scene is here dramatically improbable and transfers it to the beginning of Act II.

1–17. On this speech Coleridge's comment is:

In this speech of Edmund you see, as soon as a man cannot reconcile himself to reason, how his conscience flies off by way of appeal to nature, who is sure upon such occasions never to find fault, and also how shame sharpens a predisposition in the heart to evil. For it is a profound moral, that shame will naturally generate guilt; the oppressed will be vindictive like Shylock.

3. **Stand . . . custom**: be exposed to the cruelty of custom.
4. **curiosity of nations**: fastidiousness of civil institutions.
6. **Lag of**: later (younger) than. Cf. *Richard III*, II, i, 90.

Shall top th' legitimate. I grow; I prosper.
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER. Kent banish'd thus! and France in choler parted!
And the king gone to-night! subscrib'd his power!
Confin'd to exhibition! All this done
Upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?

EDMUND. So please your lordship, none.

[*Putting up the letter*]

GLOUCESTER. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

EDMUND. I know no news, my lord.

GLOUCESTER. What paper were you reading?

EDMUND. Nothing, my lord.

GLOUCESTER. No? What needed then that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket? the quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let 's see; come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

EDMUND. I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter from my brother that I have not all o'er-read; and, for so much as I have perus'd, I find it not fit for your o'er-looking.

16. **top th'** | top the Capell | tooth' Qq | to' th' F_1F_2 | to th' F_3F_4.
18. Scene VII Pope.
19. **subscrib'd** Qq | Prescrib'd Ff.
22. [*Putting . . . letter*] Rowe.
28. **needed** Ff | needes Q_1 | needs Q_2.

16. **top th'**: rise above, surpass. Cf. V, iii, 207.
19. **subscrib'd**: signed away. Cf. 'subscription,' III, ii, 18.
20. **Confin'd to exhibition**: limited to an allowance. This meaning of 'exhibition' survives in the name given to certain scholarships in English schools and universities.
21. **Upon the gad**: on the spur of the moment.

GLOUCESTER. Give me the letter, sir.

EDMUND. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

GLOUCESTER. Let 's see, let 's see.

EDMUND. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

GLOUCESTER. [*Reads*] This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffer'd. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I wak'd him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, EDGAR.

Hum — conspiracy! 'Sleep till I wak'd him, you should enjoy half his revenue.' My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in? When came this to you? who brought it?

EDMUND. It was not brought me, my lord; there 's the cunning of it: I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

GLOUCESTER. You know the character to be your brother's?

EDMUND. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

49. **Sleep** | slept Qq. — **wak'd** | wakt Qq | wake Ff. 52. **this to you** F_3F_4 | you to this QqF1F2.

41. **policy . . . age**: policy of reverencing age. A hendiadys.
42. **best of our times**: best part of our lives. Cf. I, i, 288.
44. **fond**: foolish. See Murray. Cf. I, iv, 290; IV, vii, 60.
56. **character**: handwriting. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, vii, 52.

GLOUCESTER. It is his.

EDMUND. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

GLOUCESTER. Has he never before sounded you in this business?

EDMUND. Never, my lord; but I have heard him oft maintain it to be fit that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declin'd, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

GLOUCESTER. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah, seek him; I 'll apprehend him. Abominable villain! Where is he?

EDMUND. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you should run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no other pretence of danger.

GLOUCESTER. Think you so?

EDMUND. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

63. **Has** Ff | Hath Qq.
66. **declin'd** F1 | declining Qq.
79. **writ** Ff | wrote Qq.
80. **other** Ff | further Qq.

76. **where**: whereas. For this metaphorical use, see Abbott, § 134.
80–81. **pretence of danger**: dangerous design. Cf. I, iv, 67.

GLOUCESTER. He cannot be such a monster —

EDMUND. Nor is not, sure.

GLOUCESTER. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth! Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him, I pray you; frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself to be in a due resolution.

EDMUND. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal. 94

GLOUCESTER. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. Though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourg'd by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide; in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond crack'd 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there 's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature; there 's father against child. We have seen the best of our time; machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banish'd! his offence, honesty! 'T is strange. [*Exit*]

88-90. EDMUND. **Nor . . . earth** Qq | Ff omit.

90–91. **wind me into him**: cautiously find out for me his purpose. Cf. *Coriolanus*, III, iii, 64. 'Me' is the ethical dative.

92. **unstate . . . resolution**: give up all I have really to know.

93. **convey**: manage with secrecy and dispatch.

95. **These late eclipses**. See Introduction, Date of Composition.

96–98. Though reason or natural philosophy may make out that these strange events proceed from the regular operation of natural laws, and so have no moral purpose or significance, yet we find them followed by calamities, as in punishment of our sins.

EDMUND. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune — often the surfeit of our own behaviour — we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforc'd obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. Edgar — 116

Enter EDGAR

And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy. My cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! fa, sol, la, mi. 120

109. Scene VIII Pope.
110. **surfeit** Q1 | surfet Q2 | surfets F1.
112. **the stars** Qq | Starres F1. — **on** Ff | by Qq.
116-117. **Edgar — . . . And pat** Steevens | Edgar; and out Q1 | *Enter Edgar.* Pat Ff.
117. Scene IX Pope.
118. **My cue** Ff | mine Qq.

111. **disasters.** With reference to its literal meaning, 'evil stars.'

113. **treachers:** traitors. Chaucer has 'trechoures'; Spenser, 'treachour.' Cf. Fr. *tricher*, 'to trick.'

114. **spherical:** planetary. Warburton thinks that the dotages of judicial astrology were meant to be satirized in this speech. Coleridge remarks upon Edmund's philosophizing as follows: "Thus scorn and misanthropy are often the anticipations and mouthpieces of wisdom in the detection of superstitions. Both individuals and nations may be free from such prejudices by being below them, as well as by rising above them."

117. A humorous allusion to clumsy play construction.

118. **cue:** catchword, the signal for an actor to go on the stage. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 186. See Murray for interesting theories of the etymology of the word.

118–120. **Tom o' Bedlam:** a bedlam beggar. 'Bedlam' is a corruption of 'Bethlehem,' the great asylum for lunatics, named after

EDGAR. Now now, brother Edmund! what serious contemplation are you in?

EDMUND. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

EDGAR. Do you busy yourself with that? 125

EDMUND. I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed unhappily: as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state; menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what. 131

EDGAR. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

EDMUND. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

EDGAR. Why, the night gone by.

EDMUND. Spake you with him? 135

EDGAR. Ay, two hours together.

EDMUND. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him by word nor countenance?

EDGAR. None at all. 139

EDMUND. Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him; and at my entreaty forbear his presence until some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this

125. **with** Ff | about Qq.
126. **writes** Ff | writ Qq.
127-133. **as of . . . Come, come** Qq | Ff omit.
128. **amities** Q_1 | armies Q_2.
134. **Why, the** Q_1 | The Ff.
138. **nor** Ff | or Qq.
141. **until** F_3 | vntill F_1 | till Qq.

St. Mary of Bethlehem. — **fa, sol, la, mi.** Learned disquisitions have been written on the significance of these notes, but probably they only indicate Edmund's singing to himself so as to seem unaware of his brother's entrance.

126–127. succeed unhappily: turn out badly.

130. **diffidences**: suspicions. Cf. *1 Henry VI*, III, iii, 10.

132. How long have you belonged to the sect of astrologers?

instant so rageth in him that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

EDGAR. Some villain hath done me wrong.

EDMUND. That 's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak. Pray ye, go; there 's my key. If you do stir abroad, go arm'd.

EDGAR. Arm'd, brother!

EDMUND. Brother, I advise you to the best; go arm'd; I am no honest man if there be any good meaning toward you. I have told you what I have seen and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it. Pray you, away.

EDGAR. Shall I hear from you anon?

EDMUND. I do serve you in this business. [*Exit* EDGAR]
A credulous father! and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy! I see the business.
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit;
All with me 's meet that I can fashion fit. [*Exit*]

146-151. **I pray . . . Arm'd, brother!** Ff | Qq omit.
152. **go arm'd** Qq | Ff omit.
153. **toward** Ff | towards Qq.
157. Scene X Pope. — [*Exit* EDGAR] Exit Ff (after line 156).

146–147. have . . . forbearance: restrain yourself and keep away. Gloucester will interpret this keeping out of his sight as a sign of guilt. For 'forbearance' in this sense cf. *Measure for Measure*, IV, i, 21–24:

DUKE. I do constantly believe you. The time is come even now. I shall crave your forbearance a little; may be I will call upon you anon, for some advantage to yourself.

161. practices: intrigues, stratagems. Cf. II, i, 73, 107.

SCENE III. *The Duke of* ALBANY'S *palace*

Enter GONERIL *and* OSWALD, *her steward*

GONERIL. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

OSWALD. Ay, madam.

GONERIL. By day and night he wrongs me; every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That sets us all at odds; I 'll not endure it.
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him; say I am sick.
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well; the fault of it I 'll answer. [*Horns within*]

OSWALD. He 's coming, madam; I hear him.

GONERIL. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows; I 'd have it come to question.
If he distaste it, let him to my sister,
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
Not to be over-rul'd. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away! Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again; and must be us'd

SCENE III | Scene XI Pope. — *The Duke . . . palace* Rowe | QqFf omit. — *Enter . . . and* OSWALD, *her steward* | . . . and Steward Ff | . . . and Gentleman Q_1.

3, 12, 22. OSWALD | Ste. F_1 | Stew. $F_2F_3F_4$ | Gent. Qq.

3. **Ay** | I Ff | Yes Qq.

11. [*Horns within*] Capell.

13–16. Prose in Qq.

15. **distaste** Ff | dislike Qq.— **my** Ff | our Qq.

17–21. **Not to be . . . abus'd** Qq | Ff omit.

15. **distaste**: relish it not. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, II, ii, 66. — **let him to.** See Abbott, §§ 30, 403.

With checks as flatteries when they are seen abus'd.
Remember what I have said.

OSWALD. Well, madam.

GONERIL. And let his knights have colder looks among you.

What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so.
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
That I may speak. I 'll write straight to my sister,
To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE IV. *A hall in the same*

Enter KENT, *disguised*

KENT. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I raz'd my likeness. Now, banish'd Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lov'st,
Shall find thee full of labours.

22. have said Ff | tell you Qq. — **Well Ff** | Very well Qq.
23-24. Prose in QqFf.
25-26. I would . . . may speak Qq | Ff omit.
26-27. I 'll write . . . for dinner | prose in QqFf. — **very** Qq | Ff omit. — [*Exeunt*] *Exit* Ff.
SCENE IV | Scene XII Pope. — *A hall* . . . Malone. — *Enter* . . . | Enter Kent QqFf.
6. So . . . come Ff | Qq omit.

21. Many emendations of this line have been suggested. See Camb or Furness. Tyrwhitt interprets, "With checks [rebukes] as well as flatteries, when they (i.e. flatteries) are seen to be abused." Some editors make 'they' refer to 'old fools.'

2. **defuse**: confuse, make indistinct. See Murray. Kent has disguised himself so as to pass unrecognized, but now he fears that his speech, or accents, may betray him.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, KNIGHTS, *and* Attendants

LEAR. Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it ready. [*Exit an* Attendant] How now! what art thou?

KENT. A man, sir.

LEAR. What dost thou profess? What wouldst thou with us?

KENT. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly that will put me in trust; to love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish.

LEAR. What art thou?

KENT. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

LEAR. If thou be'st as poor for a subject as he 's for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

KENT. Service.

LEAR. Who wouldst thou serve?

KENT. You.

LEAR. Dost thou know me, fellow?

KENT. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

8. *Horns* ... Attendants | Ff omit KNIGHTS.
9. [*Exit an* Attendant] Malone.
20. **be'st** $F_1F_3F_4$ | best F_2 | be Qq. — **he 's** Ff | he is Qq.
21. **thou art** | thar't Q_1.

15. **converse**: keep company. Cf. *As You Like It*, V, ii, 66.

16. **eat no fish.** Eating fish on the fast days of the Church, though enjoined by the civil authorities, was odious to the more advanced Protestants as a badge of Roman Catholicism. Cf. Marston, *The Dutch Courtezan:* "I trust I am none of the wicked that eat fish a Fridaies." This is probably the reason why Kent makes eating no fish a recommendation to employment. Capell interprets, "I am no weakling," and quotes *2 Henry IV*, IV, iii, 99–100.

LEAR. What 's that?

KENT. Authority.

LEAR. What services canst thou do?

KENT. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly. That which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in; and the best of me is diligence.

LEAR. How old art thou?

KENT. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for any thing; I have years on my back forty-eight.

LEAR. Follow me; thou shalt serve me: if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho, dinner! Where 's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither. [*Exit an* Attendant]

Enter OSWALD

You, you, sirrah, where 's my daughter?

OSWALD. So please you, — [*Exit*]

LEAR. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back. [*Exit a* KNIGHT] Where 's my fool, ho? I think the world 's asleep.

Re-enter KNIGHT

How now! where 's that mongrel?

KNIGHT. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

42. [*Exit an* Attendant] Dyce.
43. *Enter* . . . | Enter Steward Ff (after line 43).
46. [*Exit* . . . Dyce.
48. *Re-enter* . . . Dyce.
49. **daughter** | Daughters F_1F_2.

31. **curious**: complicated, elaborate. "Elegant, nice."— Schmidt.
45. **clotpoll**: thickhead, blockhead. The word means literally 'clod-pate.' 'Clodpole' occurs in *Twelfth Night*, III, iv, 208.

LEAR. Why came not the slave back to me when I call'd him?

KNIGHT. Sir, he answer'd me in the roundest manner, he would not.

LEAR. He would not!

KNIGHT. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertain'd with that ceremonious affection as you were wont: there 's a great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general dependants as in the duke himself also and your daughter.

LEAR. Ha! say'st thou so?

KNIGHT. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your highness wrong'd.

LEAR. Thou but remember'st me of mine own conception. I have perceiv'd a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blam'd as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness; I will look further into 't. But where 's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

KNIGHT. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pin'd away.

67. **purpose** Ff | purport Qq.

52. **roundest**: most plain-spoken. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, i, 191.

66. **jealous curiosity**: suspicious, prying scrutiny, on the watch to detect slights and neglects.

66–67. **very pretence**: real design. This speech is curious as discovering a kind of double consciousness in the old king.

69–70. The keynote of the Fool's character. Coleridge's comment is:

> The Fool is no comic buffoon to make the groundlings laugh, — no forced condescension of Shakespeare's genius to the taste of his audience. Accordingly the poet prepares for his introduction, which he never does with any of

LEAR. No more of that; I have noted it well. Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her. [*Exit an* Attendant] Go you, call hither my fool. [*Exit an* Attendant]

Re-enter OSWALD

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir; who am I, sir?

OSWALD. My lady's father.

LEAR. 'My lady's father!' my lord's knave; you dog! you slave! you cur!

OSWALD. I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

LEAR. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal? [*Striking him*]

OSWALD. I 'll not be strucken, my lord.

KENT. Nor tripp'd neither, you base foot-ball player. [*Tripping up his heels*]

LEAR. I thank thee, fellow; thou serv'st me, and I 'll love thee.

KENT. Come, sir, arise, away! I 'll teach you differences; away, away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry; but away! go to. Have you wisdom? So. [*Pushes* OSWALD *out*]

LEAR. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee; there 's earnest of thy service. [*Giving* KENT *money*]

72. [*Exit* . . . Dyce.
73. [*Exit* . . . Dyce.
74. *Re-enter* . . . | Enter Steward Ff (after **I, sir**).
80. [*Striking him*] Rowe.
81. **strucken** Ff | struck Q1.
82. [*Tripping* . . . Rowe.
87. [*Pushes* OSWALD *out*] Pushes the Steward out Theobald.
89. [*Giving* . . . Capell.

his common clowns and fools, by bringing him into living connection with the pathos of the play. He is as wonderful a creation as Caliban; his wild babblings and inspired idiocy articulate and gauge the horrors of the scene.

80. **bandy.** "A metaphor from tennis." — Steevens.

Enter FOOL

FOOL. Let me hire him too; here 's my coxcomb. [*Offering* KENT *his cap*]

LEAR. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

FOOL. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

KENT. Why, fool?

FOOL. Why, for taking one's part that 's out of favour. Nay, and thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou 'lt catch cold shortly. There, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow has banish'd two on 's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

LEAR. Why, my boy?

FOOL. If I gave them all my living, I 'd keep my coxcombs myself. There 's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

LEAR. Take heed, sirrah: the whip.

FOOL. Truth 's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipp'd out, when Lady the brach may stand by th' fire and stink.

90. [*Offering* . . . | Offering his cap Capell. — Scene XIII Pope.
93. KENT . . . **fool?** Qq | LEAR. Why, my Boy Ff.
95. **and** QqF2 | & F1 | an Pope.
97. **has** F2 | ha's F1 | hath Qq.
106. **Lady the brach** | Ladie oth'e brach Q1 | the Lady Brach Ff.

90. The 'coxcomb' was the cap worn by an "allow'd fool" (*Twelfth Night*, I, v, 101). It resembled a cock's comb in shape and color.

95. To 'smile as the wind sits' is to fall in with and humor the disposition of those in power, or to curry favor with those who have rewards to bestow. Cf. II, ii, 70–72. The Fool means that Kent has earned the name of fool by not doing this, and should wear the appropriate badge.

99. **nuncle.** A variant of 'uncle' with a transferred *n*.

106. **Lady the brach**: the female hound. Cf. *1 Henry IV*, III, i, 240.

LEAR. A pestilent gall to me!

FOOL. Sirrah, I 'll teach thee a speech.

LEAR. Do.

FOOL. Mark it, nuncle:

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest;
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

KENT. This is nothing, fool.

FOOL. Then 't is like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for 't. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

LEAR. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

FOOL. [*To* KENT] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to; he will not believe a fool.

LEAR. A bitter fool!

FOOL. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet one?

LEAR. No, lad; teach me.

FOOL. That lord that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land,

110, 122. **nuncle** Ff | uncle Qq.
119. KENT. Ff | Lear Qq.
124. [*To* KENT] Rowe.
128. **sweet one** Ff | sweete fool Qq.
130–145. FOOL. **That lord . . . snatching** Qq | Ff omit.

113. **owest**: ownest. See note, I, i, 196.
115. Believe not all you hear. Cf. *2 Henry VI*, II, iv, 38.
116. Stake less than the value of what you throw for.
120. **breath**: words. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, V, i, 273.

Come place him here by me,
Do thou for him stand:
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.

LEAR. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

FOOL. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

KENT. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

FOOL. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on 't: and ladies too, they will not let me have all the fool to myself; they 'll be snatching. Nuncle, give me an egg, and I 'll give thee two crowns.

LEAR. What two crowns shall they be?

FOOL. Why, after I have cut the egg i' th' middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' th' middle, and gav'st away both parts, thou bor'st thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt; thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gav'st thy golden one away.

133. **Do** | Or do Hanmer Capell.
143-144. **on 't . . . too** | an 't . . . too Q_1 (some copies) | an 't, and lodes too Q_1 (some copies) | on 't, and lodes too Q_2.
145. **Nuncle . . . egg** Ff | Give . . . egg, Nuncle Qq.
150. **crown** | crownes F_1.

130–145. "These lines were omitted in the Folios, perhaps for political reasons, as they seemed to censure the monopolies." — Johnson. There were scandalous abuses in the granting of monopolies in the early years of James I's reign.

136. **motley.** The professional fool wore a patchwork or parti-colored dress. The old meaning lives in 'mottled.'

151. An allusion to Æsop's famous fable of the old man and his ass.

If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so.

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year;
For wise men are grown foppish,
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

LEAR. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

FOOL. I have us'd it, nuncle, e'er since thou mad'st thy daughters thy mothers; for when thou gav'st them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie; I would fain learn to lie.

LEAR. And you lie, sirrah, we 'll have you whipp'd.

FOOL. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are; they 'll have me whipp'd for speaking true, thou 'lt have me whipp'd for lying, and sometimes I am whipp'd for holding

155. **grace** Ff | wit Qq.
166. **fools** F3 | fooles Qq | Foole F1.
167. **Prithee** | Pry'thy F1.
169. **And** Q1Ff | An Knight | If Q2.

153–154. If in this I speak like a fool or foolishly, let not me be whipped for saying it, but let him have the whipping who first finds it to be as I have said. The sage Fool is darkly forecasting the troubles that await the old king as the consequences of what he has done. Fools were liable to be whipped for using too great freedom in sarcastic speech.

155–158. There never was a time when fools were less in favor; and this is because they were never so little wanted, for wise men supply their place.

my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast par'd thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing i' th' middle. Here comes one o' the parings.

Enter GONERIL

LEAR. How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' th' frown.

FOOL. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing. [*To* GONERIL] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum;

> He that keeps nor crust nor crumb,
> Weary of all, shall want some.

[*Pointing to* LEAR] That 's a sheal'd peascod.

GONERIL. Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,

177. Scene XIV Pope.
178. **Methinks** Qq | Ff omit.
182. [*To* GONERIL] Pope.
183-184. **Mum . . . crumb** | one line in QqFf.
184. **nor crumb** | not crum F_1F_2.
186. [*Pointing . . .* | Johnson.
187. **this** | thus Johnson.

177. **what . . . on**: what business has that frown there? 'Frontlet' is properly a band for the forehead. Cf. Canzon. 27, *Zepheria*, 1594:

> But now my sunne it fits thou take thy set,
> And vayle thy face with frownes as with a frontlet.

186. **sheal'd peascod**: shelled peapod, empty husk.

That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance; which if you should, the fault
Would not scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,
Which in the tender of a wholesome weal
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

FOOL. For, you know, nuncle,

> The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
> That it 's had it head bit off by it young.

So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

LEAR. Are you our daughter?

201. **know** Ff | trow Qq.
202-203. Prose in QqFf.
203. **it 's had it** F1 | it had its F2 | it had it Qq.

194. **put it on**: encourage it, promote it. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 394; *Macbeth*, IV, iii, 239.

195. **allowance**: approval. Cf. 'allow' meaning 'approve,' II, iv, 185.

197. **tender . . . weal**: desire for a proper state of affairs. Some editors interpret 'weal' as 'commonwealth.'

203. **it 's . . . it . . . it**: it has . . . its . . . its. "Occasionally 'it,' an early provincial form of the old genitive, is found for 'its,' especially when a child is mentioned, or when any one is contemptuously spoken of as a child." — Abbott, § 228. The allusion in the couplet, probably a proverb, is to the cuckoo's habit of laying her eggs in the nest of another bird and the reputed trick of the young cuckoo in ousting its foster mother.

204. Spenser has a similar figure in describing the king's treatment by Goneril, *The Faerie Queene*, II, x, 30:

> But true it is that when the oyle is spent,
> The light goes out, and weeke[1] is thrown away.
> So when he had resigned his regiment,[2]
> His daughter gan despise his drouping day.

[1] wick. [2] government.

GONERIL. Come, sir,
I would you would make use of that good wisdom
Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away
These dispositions, that of late transport you
From what you rightly are.

FOOL. May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?

Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

LEAR. Does any here know me? This is not Lear.
Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?
Either his notion weakens, his discernings
Are lethargied — Ha! waking? 'tis not so.
Who is it that can tell me who I am?

FOOL. Lear's shadow.

LEAR. I would learn that; for, by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

FOOL. Which they will make an obedient father.

206. **Come, sir** | Ff omit.
207. **that** Qq | your Ff.
209. **transport** Ff | transform Qq.
214, 215. **Does**| Do's F1 | Doth Qq.
216. **his** Ff | or his Qq.
220-223. LEAR. **I would . . . father** Qq | Ff omit.
220. **that** | Pope omits.

213. Probably the refrain of an old song, now lost.

216. **notion**: understanding, intellect. Cf. *Macbeth*, III, i, 83.

220–221. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, the punctuation adopted put 'knowledge, and reason' in apposition to 'marks of sovereignty.'

223. **Which**: whom. See Abbott, § 266. "An instance of the relative as the commonest connective used improperly." — Moberly. Douce and Knight punctuate so as to make Lear's speech beginning "I would learn that" a continuation of his previous speech, and this speech of the fool's a continuation of his previous one, 'which' in this case referring to "Lear's shadow."

LEAR. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

GONERIL. This admiration, sir, is much o' th' savour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright;
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn; epicurism and lust
Makes it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy. Be then desir'd
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
Which know themselves and you.

LEAR. Darkness and devils!
Saddle my horses; call my train together.
Degenerate bastard! I 'll not trouble thee;
Yet have I left a daughter.

GONERIL. You strike my people; and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

228. you should Q_2 | should Q_1Ff. 238. remainder Qq | remainders Ff.
233. Makes QqFf | Make Rowe. 240. Which Ff | That Q_1 | And Q_2.

225. admiration: astonishment. She implies that it is affected.
233. Makes. For this inflection in *-s*, see Abbott, § 336.
234. grac'd: dignified, honorable. Cf. *Macbeth*, III, iv, 41.
237. disquantity: diminish. Cf. 'disnatur'd,' line 272.
238. depend: remain in the position of dependents.

Enter ALBANY

LEAR. Woe, that too late repents, — [*To* ALBANY] O, sir, are you come?
Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster!

ALBANY. Pray, sir, be patient.

LEAR. [*To* GONERIL] Detested kite! thou liest;
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know,
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name. O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which like an engine wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in, [*Striking his head*]
And thy dear judgment out! Go, go, my people.

ALBANY. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath mov'd you.

LEAR. It may be so, my lord.
Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!

246. Scene XV Pope. — [*To* ALBANY] Rowe. — **O, sir . . . come** Qq | Ff omit.
251. [*To* GONERIL] Rowe.
257. **Which** Ff | That Qq.
260. [*Striking . . . head*] Pope.

250. **the sea-monster.** Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 56–57:

The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster.

252. The superlative sense in 'rarest' extends back over 'choice.'

255. **worships**: honors and dignities.

257. **engine**: instrument of torture, the rack.

Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen, that it may live
And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child! Away, away! [*Exit*]

ALBANY. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

GONERIL. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
But let his disposition have that scope
That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR

LEAR. What, fifty of my followers at a clap!
Within a fortnight!

ALBANY. What 's the matter, sir?

LEAR. I 'll tell thee. [*To* GONERIL] Life and death! I am asham'd
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;

280. **the cause** Qq | more of it F_1| of it $F_2F_3F_4$.
282. **That** Qq | As Ff.
285. [*To* GONERIL] Theobald.

269. **derogate**: degraded. With this termination in *-ate* cf. 'felicitate,' I, i, 68. See also Abbott, § 342.

272. **thwart**: perverse. Cf. Scottish 'thrawn' in R. L. Stevenson's *Thrawn Janet*. — **disnatur'd**: without natural affection.

That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!
Th' untented woundings of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,
Beweep this cause again, I 'll pluck ye out,
And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
To temper clay. Ha, is it come to this?
Let it be so. I have another daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable.
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She 'll flay thy wolvish visage. Thou shalt find
That I 'll resume the shape which thou dost think
I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, KENT, *and* Attendants]

GONERIL. Do you mark that, my lord?

ALBANY. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you, —

GONERIL. Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!
[*To* FOOL] You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

FOOL. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry; take the fool with thee.

293. **Ha** Ff | Yea Qq. — **is . . . this** Qq | Ff omit.
299. **thou . . . thee** Qq | Ff omit. — [*Exeunt* . . . | Exit Ff.
300. Scene XVI Pope. — **my lord** | Ff omit.
304. [*To* FOOL] Ff omit.
305. **take** Ff | and take Qq.

289. **untented**: incurable (not to be probed by a tent).

295. **comfortable**: comforting, ready to comfort. Cf. *All's Well that Ends Well*, I, i, 86: "Be comfortable to my mother."

299. **warrant.** "Usually a monosyllable." — Walker.

300. Albany, though his heart is on the king's side, is reluctant to make a square issue with his wife, and she thinks to work upon him by calling his attention pointedly to Lear's threat of resuming the kingdom.

A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter.
So the fool follows after. [*Exit*]

GONERIL. This man hath had good counsel! A hundred knights!
'T is politic and safe to let him keep
At point a hundred knights! yes, that, on every dream,
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say!

ALBANY. Well, you may fear too far.

GONERIL. Safer than trust too far.
Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken. I know his heart.
What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister;
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
When I have show'd th' unfitness, —

310–311. Ellis in his *English Pronunciation* shows that in the sixteenth century 'halter' and 'after' were pronounced 'hauter' and 'auter.'

314. **At point**: fully armed and ready. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 200.

316. **enguard**: enclose as with a guard. See Abbott, § 440. Cf. 'enwheel,' *Othello*, II, i, 87; 'encave,' *Othello*, IV, i, 82; 'enrank,' *1 Henry VI*, I, i, 115.

317. **in mercy**. "*In misericordiâ* is the legal phrase."—Malone.

318–323. Upon this Coleridge comments as follows:

The monster Goneril prepares what is necessary, while the character of Albany renders a still more maddening grievance possible, namely, Regan and Cornwall in perfect sympathy of monstrosity. Not a sentiment, not an image, which can give pleasure on its own account, is admitted; whenever these creatures are introduced, and they are brought forward as little as possible, pure horror reigns throughout.

Re-enter OSWALD

How now, Oswald!
What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

OSWALD. Ay, madam.

GONERIL. Take you some company, and away to horse;
Inform her full of my particular fear,
And thereto add such reasons of your own
As may compact it more. Get you gone,
And hasten your return. [*Exit* OSWALD] No, no, my lord;
This milky gentleness and course of yours,
Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon,
You are much more attask'd for want of wisdom
Than prais'd for harmful mildness.

ALBANY. How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell:
Striving to better, oft we mar what 's well.

GONERIL. Nay, then —

ALBANY. Well, well; th' event. [*Exeunt*]

323. *Re-enter* . . . | Enter Steward Ff.
325. **Ay** Rowe | I Ff | Yes Qq.
329. **Get** | So get Pope.
330. [*Exit* OSWALD] QqFf omit.
332. **not** | it not Pope.
333. **You are** | Your are F_1 | Y'are Qq. — **attask'd** | attaskt Q_1 | at task F_1.

327. **my particular**: my own personal.

329. **compact**: strengthen, make more consistent and credible.

331. **milky . . . course**: milky and gentle course. A hendiadys.

333. **attask'd**: taken to task, blamed, criticised. See Abbott, § 437. Many modern editors, including Furness, follow with Capell the Folio reading 'at task.'

336. This idea in similar words is in *Sonnets*, CIII, 9–10:

> Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
> To mar the subject that before was well?

338. As before implied, Albany shrinks from a word storm with his helpmate, and so tells her, in effect, "Well, let us not quarrel about it, but wait and see how your course works."

SCENE V. *Court before the same*

Enter LEAR, KENT, *and* FOOL

LEAR. Go you before to Gloucester with these letters. Acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you know than comes from her demand out of the letter. If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you. 4

KENT. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have deliver'd your letter. [*Exit*]

FOOL. If a man's brains were in 's heels, were 't not in danger of kibes?

LEAR. Ay, boy. 9

FOOL. Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall not go slip-shod.

LEAR. Ha, ha, ha!

SCENE V | Scene XVII Pope. — *Court . . . same* Capell. — *Enter . . .* KENT, *and . . .* | Enter . . . Kent, Gentleman, and . . . Ff.
4. afore Ff | before Qq.
10. not Ff | nere Qq.

1. **Gloucester**: the city of Gloucester. Shakespeare probably made this the residence of the Duke of Cornwall, to increase the probability of his setting out late from thence on a visit to the Earl of Gloucester. — **these letters**: this letter. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 110.

1–3. This instruction to Kent is very well judged. The old king feels mortified at what has happened, and does not want Kent to volunteer any information about it to his other daughter.

7–8. **brains.** Shakespeare uses 'brains' as singular in *All 's Well that Ends Well*, III, ii, 16. — **kibes**: heel sores. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, i, 153.

10–11. Moberly thus comments on this:

The Fool laughs at Kent's promise of rapidity, and says, first, that, "when men's brains are in their heels" (that is, when they have no more wit than is needed to go fast), "they may get brain-chilblains"; and, secondly, that, "as Lear has no brains, he is in no such danger."

FOOL. Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee kindly; for though she 's as like this as a crab 's like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

LEAR. What canst tell, boy?

FOOL. She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' th' middle on 's face?

LEAR. No.

FOOL. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side 's nose; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

LEAR. I did her wrong.

FOOL. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

LEAR. No.

FOOL. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

LEAR. Why?

FOOL. Why, to put 's head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

LEAR. I will forget my nature. So kind a father! Be my horses ready?

FOOL. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no moe than seven is a pretty reason.

16. **What . . . tell** Ff | Why what canst thou tell my Qq.
18. **on 's** Ff | of his Qq.
33. **moe** F_3 | mo F_1F_2 | more Qq.

13. **kindly**. Used here in the two senses of (1) 'affectionately,' and (2) 'after her kind,' or 'according to her nature.'

14. **crab**: crab apple. So in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 48.

22. Lear is now beginning to feel remorse for his treatment of Cordelia. "This and Lear's subsequent ejaculations to himself are in verse; his distracted replies to the Fool in prose." — Herford.

30. **forget my nature**: renounce my natural kindness.

33. **the seven stars**. Either (1) the Pleiades; or (2) the Great Bear. — **moe**: more. The old comparative of 'many.' In Middle English

LEAR. Because they are not eight?

FOOL. Yes, indeed; thou wouldst make a good fool.

LEAR. To take 't again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

FOOL. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I 'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

LEAR. How 's that?

FOOL. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

LEAR. O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven! Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!

Enter GENTLEMAN

How now! are the horses ready?

GENTLEMAN. Ready, my lord.

LEAR. Come, boy. [*Exeunt*]

44. *Enter* GENTLEMAN Theobald.

'moe,' or 'mo,' was used of number and with collective nouns; 'more' had reference specifically to size. See Skeat.

36. He is meditating on what he has before threatened, namely, to "resume the shape which he has cast off."

42. "The mind's own anticipation of madness! The deepest tragic notes are often struck by a half sense of the impending blow."—Coleridge. So in the case described by Bucknill and quoted by Furness:

> This self-consciousness of gathering madness is common in various forms of the disease. . . . A most remarkable instance of this was presented in the case of a patient, whose passionate, but generous, temper became morbidly exaggerated after a blow upon the head. His constantly expressed fear was that of impending madness; and when the calamity he so much dreaded had actually arrived, and he raved incessantly and incoherently, one frequently heard the very words of Lear proceeding from his lips: "O, let me not be mad!"

ACT II

SCENE I. *The Earl of* GLOUCESTER'S *castle*

Enter EDMUND *and* CURAN, *meeting*

EDMUND. Save thee, Curan.

CURAN. And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him this night.

EDMUND. How comes that? 5

CURAN. Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad? I mean the whisper'd ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments.

EDMUND. Not I; pray you, what are they? 9

CURAN. Have you heard of no likely wars toward 'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

EDMUND. Not a word.

CURAN. You may do, then, in time. Fare you well, sir. [*Exit*]

EDMUND. The duke be here to-night? The better! best! This weaves itself perforce into my business. 15 My father hath set guard to take my brother;

The Earl . . . castle | QqFf omit. — *Enter . . . meeting* | Enter Bastard, and Curan, severally Ff.
1, 5, etc. EDMUND | Bast. QqFf.
2. **you** | your F1.
14. Scene II Pope.

1. **Save thee.** A salutation contracted from 'God save thee.'
8. **ear-kissing arguments**: whispered subjects (for discussion).
10. **toward**: at hand, impending. Cf. III, iii, 17.

And I have one thing, of a queasy question,
Which I must act. Briefness and fortune, work!
Brother, a word; descend; brother, I say!

Enter EDGAR

My father watches; O sir, fly this place!
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You 've now the good advantage of the night.
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?
He 's coming hither, now, i' th' night, i' th' haste,
And Regan with him; have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany?
Advise yourself.

EDGAR. I 'm sure on 't, not a word.

EDMUND. I hear my father coming: pardon me;
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you.
Draw; seem to defend yourself; now quit you well.
Yield! come before my father! Light, ho, here!
Fly, brother! Torches, torches! So, farewell. [*Exit* EDGAR]
Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion

20. *Enter* EDGAR | in Ff after **work.**

17. queasy: ticklish, "requiring to be handled nicely."— Steevens.

25–26. This line is commonly explained, Have you said nothing in censure of the party he has formed against the Duke of Albany? This supposes Edmund to be merely repeating the question he has asked before. But the proper sense of 'upon his party' is 'upon his side,' or 'in his favor.' Delius probably gives the right explanation:

In order to confuse his brother, and urge him to a more speedy flight, by giving him the idea that he is surrounded by perils, Edmund asks Edgar, first, whether he has not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall, and then, reversing the question, asks whether he has not said something on the side of Cornwall 'gainst the Duke of Albany.

Of my more fierce endeavour. [*Wounds his arm*]
I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport. Father, father!
Stop, stop! No help?

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants *with torches*

GLOUCESTER. Now, Edmund, where 's the villain?

EDMUND. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand auspicious mistress.

GLOUCESTER. But where is he?

EDMUND. Look, sir, I bleed.

GLOUCESTER. Where is the villain, Edmund?

EDMUND. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he could—

GLOUCESTER. Pursue him, ho! Go after.
[*Exeunt some* Servants]
By no means what?

EDMUND. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;
But that I told him the revenging gods
'Gainst parricides did all the thunder bend,
Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to th' father; sir, in fine,
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood

34. [*Wounds his arm*] Rowe.
37. Scene III Pope.
40. **stand** Ff Globe Delius Furness | stand 's Q_1 Camb | stand his Q_2.
43. [*Exeunt* . . . Servants] Dyce.
46. **the thunder** Ff Delius Furness | their thunders Qq Globe.

34–35. Such feats by drunken gallants are mentioned in more than one Elizabethan play.

39–40. Edmund knows his man. Gloucester has already shown himself a believer in planetary influence. — **Mumbling of.** See Abbott, § 178. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, v, 175; II, i, 92.

To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion
With his prepared sword he charges home
My unprovided body, lanc'd mine arm;
And when he saw my best alarum'd spirits,
Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to th' encounter,
Or whether gasted by the noise I made,
Full suddenly he fled.

GLOUCESTER. Let him fly far:
Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;
And found, — dispatch. The noble duke my master,
My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night.
By his authority I will proclaim it,
That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks,
Bringing the murderous coward to the stake;
He that conceals him, death.

EDMUND. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech
I threaten'd to discover him. He replied,
'Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal
Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee

52. **lanc'd** Theobald | launcht Q_1 | latch'd **Ff**.
53. **And when** **Ff** | But when Qq | But whe'r Furness (Staunton conj.).
62. **coward** **Ff** | caytife Q_1 | caytiffe Q_2.
68. **reposal** F_3 | reposall F_1F_2 | reposure Qq.

55. **gasted**: frightened. The same word etymologically as 'ghost,' which was originally spelled in the same way. See Murray.
59. **arch**: chief. Still used in composition, 'arch'-angel, 'arch'-duke.
65. **pight**: resolved, determined. An old past tense of 'pitch,' used in its literal sense in *Troilus and Cressida*, V, x, 23–24: "tents . . . proudly pight upon our Phrygian plains." — **curst**: sharp, angry.
67. **unpossessing**: incapable of holding property.

Make thy words faith'd? No; what I should deny —
As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce
My very character — I 'd turn it all
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice;
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it.'

GLOUCESTER. Strong and fasten'd villain!
Would he deny his letter? I never got him. [*Tucket within*]
Hark, the duke's trumpets! I know not why he comes.
All ports I 'll bar; the villain shall not scape;
The duke must grant me that. Besides, his picture
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
May have due note of him; and of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I 'll work the means
To make thee capable.

70. **I should** Qq | should I Ff.
76. **spurs** | spurres Qq | spirits Ff.
77. **Strong** Qq | O strange Ff.
78. **I . . . him** Qq | said he Ff.— [*Tucket within*] in Ff after **seek it.**
79. **why** Qq | wher Ff.

72. **character**: handwriting, signature. Cf. I, ii, 56.

76. **pregnant**. Either (1) 'ready,' or (2) 'full of force.'

77. **Strong and fasten'd**: resolute and obdurate. In defence of the Folio reading, Schmidt points out that Shakespeare sometimes uses 'strange' in the sense of 'enormous,' 'unheard of.'

78. *Tucket:* a peculiar series of notes on a trumpet, "which beinge hearde simply of itselfe, without addition, commands nothing but marching after the leader." — Markham. Probably the word is from the Ital. *toccata.*

84. **natural**. The word is here used with great art in the double sense of 'illegitimate' and as opposed to 'unnatural,' which latter epithet is by implication applied to Edgar.

85. **capable**: legally capable of succeeding to the inheritance.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Attendants

CORNWALL. How now, my noble friend! since I came hither,
Which I can call but now, I have heard strange news.
REGAN. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short
Which can pursue th' offender. How dost, my lord?
GLOUCESTER. O madam, my old heart is crack'd, — it 's crack'd!
REGAN. What, did my father's godson seek your life?
He whom my father nam'd? your Edgar?
GLOUCESTER. O lady, lady, shame would have it hid!
REGAN. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father?
GLOUCESTER. I know not, madam. 'T is too bad, too bad.
EDMUND. Yes, madam, he was of that consort.
REGAN. No marvel then, though he were ill affected;
'T is they have put him on the old man's death,
To have th' expense and waste of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them; and with such cautions,

86. Scene IV Pope.
87. **strange news** | strange newes Qq | strangenesse F_1F_2.
90. **it 's** Ff | is Qq.
95. **tend** Theobald | tends Qq | tended Ff.
100. **th' expense and waste of his** | th' expence and wast of his F_1 | the wast and spoyle of his Q_1 | th' expence and wast of $F_2F_3F_4$.

91–92. There is a peculiar subtlety and intensity of malice in these speeches of Regan. Coleridge justly observes that she makes "no reference to the guilt, but only to the accident, which she uses as an occasion for sneering at her father." And he adds, "Regan is not, in fact, a greater monster than Goneril, but she has the power of casting more venom."

99. **put him on.** See note, I, iv, 194.

100. **revenues.** For pronunciation, see note, I, i, 130.

That, if they come to sojourn at my house,
I 'll not be there.

CORNWALL. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.

EDMUND. It was my duty, sir.

GLOUCESTER. He did bewray his practice, and receiv'd
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

CORNWALL. Is he pursued?

GLOUCESTER. Ay, my good lord.

CORNWALL. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm; make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please. For you, Edmund,
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours.
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

EDMUND. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

GLOUCESTER. For him I thank your grace.

CORNWALL. You know not why we came to visit you, —

REGAN. Thus out of season, threading dark-ey'd night;
Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise,
Wherein we must have use of your advice.

106. **It was** Ff | 'T was Qq. 120. **poise** | poyse Q_1 (some copies) | prise Q_1 (some copies) | prize Q_2Ff Rowe Pope Hanmer.

107. **bewray**: disclose. Cf. *3 Henry VI*, I, i, 211. The original meaning is 'accuse.' See Murray.

119. A similar quibble occurs in *King John*, V, iv, 11. Regan's snatching the speech out of her husband's mouth is rightly in character.

120. **Occasions . . . of some poise**: business of importance.

Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home; the several messengers
From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,
Lay comforts to your bosom; and bestow
Your needful counsel to our businesses,
Which craves the instant use.
GLOUCESTER. I serve you, madam.
Your graces are right welcome. [*Exeunt. Flourish*]

SCENE II. *Before* GLOUCESTER'S *castle*

Enter KENT *and* OSWALD, *severally*

OSWALD. Good dawning to thee, friend; art of this house?
KENT. Ay.
OSWALD. Where may we set our horses?
KENT. I' th' mire.
OSWALD. Prithee, if thou lov'st me, tell me.
KENT. I love thee not.
OSWALD. Why, then I care not for thee.

123. **best** Q_1 (some copies) Q_2Ff | lest Q_1 (some copies) | least Globe Camb.
127. **businesses** Ff | busines Q_1 | businesse Q_2.
SCENE II | Scene V Pope. — *Before . . . castle* | QqFf omit.
1. **dawning** Ff | euen Qq. — **this** Ff | the Qq.
5. **Prithee** | Prythee F_1 | PretheeQq.

123. 'Which' refers to 'writ,' not to 'differences.'

124. **from our home**: from some other place than home. The expression would be taken in its usual sense, if the reading 'least,' line 123, were adopted.

1. It is still so dark that Oswald does not recognize Kent. Cf. lines 25–26: "though it be night, yet the moon shines." Kent probably knows him by the voice.

KENT. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make thee care for me. 9

OSWALD. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

KENT. Fellow, I know thee.

OSWALD. What dost thou know me for?

KENT. A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking, whoreson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, and the son and heir of a mongrel; one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition. 20

OSWALD. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

KENT. What a brazen-fac'd varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days since I tripp'd up thy heels and

8. **Lipsbury** QqFf | Finsbury Collier | Ledbury Jennens conj.
15. **-taking** Ff | -taking knaue a Qq.
19. **clamorous** QqF3 | clamours F1F2.
24. **days** Ff | days ago Qq.

8. **Lipsbury.** "It may be a coined name, and it is just possible it might mean the teeth, as being the pinfold within the lips."— Nares.

14. **three-suited.** Servants were allowed a limited number of suits in the year. — **hundred-pound.** Possession of one hundred pounds was the lowest property qualification for jury service.

15. **worsted-stocking.** Every one who could wore silk hose. — **lily-liver'd**: cowardly. Cf. *Macbeth*, V, iii, 15. — **action-taking**: pusillanimous, going to law rather than fighting it out with the sword. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, IV, i, 36–37.

16–17. **glass-gazing**: foppish. — **superserviceable.** Either (1) 'above your work,' or (2) 'sycophantic.' — **one-trunk-inheriting.** Either (1) 'owning but one chest,' or (2) 'having but one trunk-hose.'

20. **addition**: title, string of titles. Cf. I, i, 129.

beat thee before the king? Draw, you rogue! for, though it be night, yet the moon shines; I 'll make a sop o' th' moonshine of you, you whoreson cullionly barber-monger, draw!

[*Drawing his sword*]

OSWALD. Away! I have nothing to do with thee. 28

KENT. Draw, you rascal! you come with letters against the king, and take vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father. Draw, you rogue, or I 'll so carbonado your shanks! draw, you rascal! come your ways.

OSWALD. Help, ho! murder! help!

KENT. Strike, you slave! stand, rogue, stand; you neat slave, strike! [*Beating him*]

OSWALD. Help, ho! murder! murder! 36

Enter EDMUND, *with his rapier drawn*, CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants

EDMUND. How now! What 's the matter? Part.

27. **of you** Ff | a' you, draw Qq. — [*Drawing his sword*] Rowe.
35. [*Beating him*] Rowe.
37. *Enter* EDMUND, *with his rapier drawn*, CORNWALL ... *and* Servants Globe | Enter Bastard, Cornewall ... Servants F1. — Part Ff | Qq omit | [*Parting them*] Dyce conj.

26–27. sop o' th' moonshine. That the figure here is the old dish of eggs boiled in salad oil, called 'eggs in moonshine,' is not unlikely (cf. other slang phrases of like import taken from the kitchen, 'carbonado' (line 31), 'baste you,' 'cook your hash,' 'give you a dressing,' etc.), but it may be a splendid example of hyperbole.

27. cullionly barber-monger: wretched barber-trimmed fop.

30. vanity. A common character in the moral plays. Cf. *1 Henry IV*, II, iv, 500. — **puppet.** Here a term of contempt.

31. carbonado: "cut cross-wise for broiling." — Dyce.

34. neat. Either (1) 'spruce,' 'finical' (line 16), or (2) 'mere,' 'unmitigated.' Singer suggested that 'cowherd' was implied, 'neat' being used as in *The Winter's Tale*, I, ii, 123–125.

37. Many editors interpret 'Part' as a stage direction.

KENT. With you, goodman boy, if you please. Come, I 'll flesh ye; come on, young master.

GLOUCESTER. Weapons! arms! What 's the matter here?

CORNWALL. Keep peace, upon your lives; 41
He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

REGAN. The messengers from our sister and the king.

CORNWALL. What is your difference? speak.

OSWALD. I am scarce in breath, my lord. 45

KENT. No marvel, you have so bestirr'd your valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee; a tailor made thee.

CORNWALL. Thou art a strange fellow; a tailor make a man? 49

KENT. Ay, a tailor, sir; a stone-cutter or a painter could not have made him so ill, though they had been but two hours o' th' trade.

CORNWALL. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

OSWALD. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spar'd at suit of his gray beard, — 55

KENT. Thou zed! thou unnecessary letter! My lord, if

38. **if** Ff | and Qq | an Staunton.
39. **ye** Ff | you Qq.
50. **Ay** Johnson | I Qq | Ff omit.
51-52. **they** Ff | he Q_2 | hee Q_1. — **hours** | houres Qq | yeares F_1.
52. **o' th'** F_3 | oth' F_1 | at the Qq.

38. Kent purposely takes Edmund's 'matter' in the sense of 'quarrel,' and means, 'I 'll fight with you if you wish it.' 'Goodman' is here used contemptuously.

39. **flesh**: initiate. Literally, 'give a first taste of flesh.' Originally a hunting term. Cf. *1 Henry IV*, V, iv, 133.

47. **disclaims in**: disowns. — **a tailor . . .** Cf. *Cymbeline*, IV, ii, 81–83:

> No, nor thy tailor, rascal,
> Who is thy grandfather: he made those clothes,
> Which, as it seems, make thee.

56. **zed! thou unnecessary letter.** "Z is much harder amongst us, and seldom seen: s is become its lieutenant-general." — Mulcaster,

you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the wall with him. Spare my gray beard, you wagtail?

CORNWALL. Peace, sirrah! 60
You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

KENT. Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

CORNWALL. Why art thou angry?

KENT. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these, 65
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain
Which are too intrinse t' unloose; smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebel,
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks 70
With every gale and vary of their masters,

67. **too intrinse** Malone | t' intrince F1 | to intrench Qq.
69. **Bring** Qq | Being Ff. — **their** Qq | the Ff.
70. **Renege** F2F3F4 | Reneag Qq | Reuenge F1.
71. **gale** | gall F1. — **vary** | varry F1 | veering Allen conj.

1532–1611, *Elementarie ... Of the Right Writing of our English Tung.* "Z is a letter often heard amongst us but seldom seen." — Ben Jonson, *English Grammar.*

57. **unbolted**: coarse. Literally 'unsifted.' In *Henry V*, II, ii, 137, 'bolted' is used in the sense of 'refined.'

59. 'Wagtail' connotes pertness and what is described in line 95.

67. **intrinse**: tightly drawn. Probably a Shakespearian coinage. 'Intrinsicate' occurs in *Antony and Cleopatra*, V, ii, 307. Cf. 'reverb,' I, i, 147, for 'reverberate.' — **smooth**: flatter, humor. Cf. *Richard III*, I, iii, 48: "Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog."

68. **rebel.** An instance of "confusion of proximity." See Abbott, § 412. Or, as Abbott suggests, 'every' may be used as a plural.

70–72. For the general idea here cf. I, iv, 95. — **Renege**: deny. 'Reneag,' the spelling of the Quartos, shows the pronunciation. — **halcyon**: kingfisher. "A lytle byrde called the Kings Fysher, being

Knowing nought, like dogs, but following.
A plague upon your epileptic visage!
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?
Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
I 'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

CORNWALL. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

GLOUCESTER. How fell you out? say that.

KENT. No contraries hold more antipathy
Than I and such a knave.

CORNWALL. Why dost thou call him knave? What 's his offence?

KENT. His countenance likes me not.

CORNWALL. No more, perchance, does mine, nor his, nor hers.

KENT. Sir, 't is my occupation to be plain;
I have seen better faces in my time

72. **Knowing** | As knowing Pope.

hanged vp in the ayre by the neck, his nebbe or byll wyll be alwayes dyrect or strayght against ye winde." — Lupton, *The Tenth Booke of Notable Things*. Cf. Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, I, i, 38–39:

> But now how stands the wind?
> Into what corner peers my halcyon's bill?

73. **epileptic**: distorted by a forced grin or smile.

75–76. 'Sarum' is 'Salisbury.' Salisbury plain used to be noted as a lonely and desolate region. Cadbury, in Somersetshire, is one of the traditional sites of Camelot, and there large numbers of geese were bred. Old romances also make Camelot the place where King Arthur kept his court in the west. "Here, therefore," says Dyce, "there is perhaps a double allusion, — to Camelot as famous for its geese, and to those knights who were vanquished by the Knights of the Round Table being sent to Camelot to yield themselves as vassals to King Arthur."

Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

CORNWALL. This is some fellow,
Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature; he cannot flatter, he;
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth!
And they will take it, so; if not, he 's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly-ducking observants
That stretch their duties nicely.

KENT. Sir, in good faith, in sincere verity,
Under th' allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phœbus' front, —

CORNWALL. What mean'st by this?

KENT. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer: he that beguil'd you in a plain accent was a plain knave; which, for my part, I

86. **Than** Q_2 | Then Q_1Ff.
92. **And** Ff | An Pope.
97. **faith** Ff | sooth Qq.
98. **great** Ff | graund Q_1.
100. **flickering** Pope | flitkering Qq | flicking Ff.

89–90. **constrains . . . nature**: forces on him a manner of speech and behavior unlike his own. In Shakespeare, 'garb' means 'style,' 'manner.'

95–96. **observants**: obsequious lackeys. Accent on first syllable. Cf. *Timon of Athens*, IV, iii, 212. — **stretch**: strain. — **nicely**: with punctilious precision. In lines 47–49 Carlyle's 'clothes-philosophy' is foreshadowed; here his and Thackeray's tirades against 'flunkeyism' are adumbrated.

98–99. 'Aspect' (accent on last syllable) and 'influence' are here used in their original sense as astrological terms.

will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to 't.

CORNWALL. What was th' offence you gave him?

OSWALD. I never gave him any.
It pleas'd the king his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, compact, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthied him, got praises of the king
For him attempting who was self-subdued;
And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here again.

KENT. None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajax is their fool.

CORNWALL. Fetch forth the stocks!
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We 'll teach you —

KENT. Sir, I am too old to learn;
Call not your stocks for me. I serve the king,

110. **compact** Ff | coniunct Qq. 118. **ancient** Ff | miscreant Qq.—
115. **dread** Qq | dead Ff. **reverend** | reuerent Q_1Ff.

110. **compact**: in concert with. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, V, i, 242.

114. By "him who was self-subdued," Oswald means himself, pretending that the poor figure he made was the result of virtuous self-control, and not of imbecility or fear.

115. **in the fleshment of**: having tasted blood through, made eager by. See note, line 39.

116–117. Either (1) "Ajax is a fool to them, *videlicet* in bragging" (Capell); or (2) "Such a plain, blunt, brave fellow as Ajax was, is the person these rascals always choose to make their butt and put their tricks upon" (Heath).

On whose employment I was sent to you.
You shall do small respects, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

CORNWALL. Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life and honour,
There shall he sit till noon.

REGAN. Till noon! till night, my lord; and all night too.

KENT. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

REGAN. Sir, being his knave, I will.

CORNWALL. This is a fellow of the self-same colour
Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the stocks!

[*Stocks brought out*]

GLOUCESTER. Let me beseech your grace not to do so.
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for 't. Your purpos'd low correction
Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches
For pilferings and most common trespasses
Are punish'd with. The king must take it ill,
That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

CORNWALL. I 'll answer that.

REGAN. My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,

122. **respects** Ff | respect Qq.
130. **colour** Ff | nature Qq.
131. [*Stocks . . . out*] in Ff after line 129 | Qq omit.
133-137. **His fault . . . punish'd with** Qq | Ff omit.
137. **must** Qq | his Master needs must Ff.

130. **colour**: kind, sort. Cf. *As You Like It*, I, ii, 107; III, ii, 435.
131. **bring away**: hasten to bring. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, II, i, 41.

For following her affairs. Put in his legs.
[KENT *is put in the stocks*]
Come, my good lord, away.
[*Exeunt all but* GLOUCESTER *and* KENT]

GLOUCESTER. I 'm sorry for thee, friend; 't is the duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd. I 'll entreat for thee.

KENT. Pray, do not, sir. I have watch'd, and travell'd hard;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I 'll whistle.
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels.
Give you good morrow!

GLOUCESTER. The duke 's to blame in this; 't will be ill taken. [*Exit*]

KENT. Good king, that must approve the common saw,
Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st
To the warm sun!

142. Ff omit. — [KENT ... *stocks*] Rowe (after line 139).
143. [*Exeunt* . . .] Exit Ff.
144. Scene VI Pope Hanmer | Scene VII Warburton Johnson. — **duke's** | Duke F1.

146. **rubb'd**: hindered. Another term from bowls. Cf. "bias of nature," I, ii, 102. So the noun in *Henry V*, V, ii, 33.

149. A man set in the stocks was said to be 'punished by the heels'; and Kent probably alludes to this. He also means, apparently, that the fortune even of a good man may have holes in the heels of its shoes, or, as is often said, may be 'out at toes,' or 'out at elbows.'

152–154. **approve**: prove the truth of. Cf. I, i, 178. The "common saw" ('say-ing,' 'proverb') is, "Out of God's blessing into the warm sun," signifying going from better to worse. Skeat ingeniously suggests that the 'saw' originated in the unseemly haste of the congregation to leave the church after the benediction.

Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter! Nothing almost sees miracles
But misery. I know 'tis from Cordelia,
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course; and shall find time,
From this enormous state, seeking to give
Losses their remedies. All weary and o'erwatch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night; smile once more; turn thy wheel! [*Sleeps*]

157. **miracles** Ff | my wracke Q_1 (some copies) Q_2 | my rackles Q_1 (some copies).

164-165. **This . . . night** | one line QqFf. — [*Sleeps*] sleepes Q_1 | He sleepes Q_2 | Ff omit.

157–158. **Nothing . . . misery**: hardly any but the miserable see miracles. Here 'see' probably means 'experience,' — a sense in which it is often used. Kent appears to be thinking of the supernatural cures and acts of beneficence recorded in the Gospels, where indeed miracles are almost never wrought but in behalf of the wretched, and upon this thought he seems to be building a hope of better times, both for himself and the old king; while, on the other hand, nothing short of a miraculous providence seems able to turn their course of misfortune.

160–162. **enormous**: abnormal, anomalous (Lat. *e-*, *norma*, 'out of rule'). If 'shall find' be taken as in the same construction with 'I know,' line 158, the passage yields the following interpretation:

From this anomalous state of mine, I shall gain time to communicate and co-operate with Cordelia in her endeavour to restore the kingdom to its former condition; 'to give losses their remedies,' that is, to reinstate Lear on the throne, Cordelia in his favour, and myself in his confidence, and in my own rights and titles. All this Kent utters in a disjointed way, because half-asleep; and then, having viewed the situation as hopefully as he can, he puts up a prayer to Fortune, and drops off to sleep.

Jennens suggested that the lines are made up of disjointed scraps of Cordelia's letter, read with difficulty in the uncertain light.

Scene III. *A wood*

Enter Edgar

Edgar. I heard myself proclaim'd;
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escap'd the hunt. No port is free; no place,
That guard and most unusual vigilance
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may scape,
I will preserve myself; and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast. My face I 'll grime with filth;
Blanket my loins; elf all my hair in knots;
And with presented nakedness outface
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;

Scene III | Scene VII Pope | Ff continue scene. — *A wood* Staunton.
1. **heard** F_1F_2 | heare Qq.
10. **elf** | elfe F_1 | else Q_2F_2. — **hair** F_4 | haire Qq | haires F_1F_2.
15. **bare** Qq | Ff omit.

2. **happy.** Either (1) 'fortuitous,' 'chance'; or (2) 'lucky,' 'fortunate' (Lat. *felix*). Cf. IV, vi, 204, 206.

10. **elf.** The entangling and knotting of the hair was supposed to be done by elves and fairies in the night; hence tangles were called 'elf-knots.' Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 89–91.

14–16. In Dekker's *Belman of London*, three editions of which appeared in 1608, the year in which *King Lear* was first printed, is the following description of a 'Bedlam beggar,' or 'Abraham man':

He sweares he hath bin in Bedlam, and will talke frantickely of purpose: you see pinnes stuck in sundry places of his native [naked] flesh, especially

And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,
Sometimes with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!
That 's something yet; Edgar I nothing am. [*Exit*]

SCENE IV. *Before* GLOUCESTER'S *castle;* KENT *in the stocks*

Enter LEAR, FOOL, *and* GENTLEMAN

LEAR. 'T is strange that they should so depart from home,
And not send back my messenger.
GENTLEMAN. As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.
KENT. Hail to thee, noble master!
LEAR. Ha!
Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?
KENT. No, my lord.

18. **sheep-cotes** | sheep-coates Qq | Sheeps-Coates F2.
19. **Sometimes** Ff | Sometime Qq.
SCENE IV Steevens | Scene VIII Pope | Ff continue scene.—*Before . . . stocks* Globe.
1. **home** Ff | hence Qq.
2. **messenger** | Messengers Ff.

in his armes, which paine hee gladly puts himselfe to . . . onely to make you beleeue he is out of his wits; he calls himselfe by the name of *Poore Tom*, and, comming neere any body, cries out, *Poor Tom is a cold.*

18. **pelting**: paltry. For etymological relation, see Murray.

19. **bans**: curses. "In Med. Latin *bannum* was used to denote, first, an edict or proclamation, hence, a summons or an interdict."—Clar.

20. **Turlygod**. Perhaps a corruption of 'Turlupin,' a name applied to a fanatical sect, resembling 'Bedlam beggars' as described by Dekker, who overran France in the fourteenth century.

FOOL. Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied by the head, dogs and bears by th' neck, monkeys by th' loins, and men by th' legs; when a man 's over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks.

LEAR. What 's he that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?

KENT. It is both he and she;
Your son and daughter.

LEAR. No.

KENT. Yes.

LEAR. No, I say.

KENT. I say, yea.

LEAR. No, no, they would not.

KENT. Yes, they have.

LEAR. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

KENT. By Juno, I swear, ay.

LEAR. They durst not do 't;
They could not, would not do 't; 't is worse than murder,
To do upon respect such violent outrage.
Resolve me with all modest haste which way
Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

7. **cruel** | cruell F_1F_2 | crewell Qq | crewel F_3F_4.
8. **head** Ff | heeles Qq.
9. **man 's** Q_2 | man F_1.
18, 19. LEAR. **No, no . . . they have** Qq | Ff omit.

7. **cruel.** There is a quibble here with 'crewel,' meaning 'worsted.' Cf. spelling in Quartos and later Folios.

10. **nether-stocks**: stockings. Another pun, of course.

23. **upon respect**: upon due consideration, deliberately.

24. **Resolve**: inform. Shakespeare uses the word in the three main senses of (1) 'relax,' 'dissolve,' *Hamlet*, I, ii, 130; (2) 'inform,' as here; and (3) 'determine,' *3 Henry VI*, III, iii, 219.

KENT. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,
Which presently they read: on whose contents,
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse;
Commanded me to follow and attend
The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks;
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome, I perceiv'd, had poison'd mine —
Being the very fellow which of late
Display'd so saucily against your highness —
Having more man than wit about me, drew;
He rais'd the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

FOOL. Winter 's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way.

30. **panting** | painting F1.
33. **whose** Qq | those Ff.
34. **meiny** F3 | meiney F1 | men Qq.
39. **which** Ff | that Qq.
45-51. FOOL. **Winter's not . . . in a year** Ff | Qq omit.

32. **spite of intermission**: in spite of the interruption or delay naturally consequent upon what Kent was himself doing. In other words, the 'reeking post' did not heed Kent's action at all, nor allow himself to be delayed by it. With 'intermission' in this sense cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 201; *Macbeth*, IV, iii, 232.

33. **presently**: immediately. So in line 111.

34. **meiny**: retinue, household. Cf. 'menial,' a derivative.

45. If such is their behavior, the king's troubles are not over yet. Things are going the wrong way.

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind.

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

LEAR. O, how this mother swells up toward my heart!
Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow,
Thy element 's below! Where is this daughter?

KENT. With the earl, sir, here within.

LEAR. Follow me not; stay here. [*Exit*]

GENTLEMAN. Made you no more offence but what you speak of?

KENT. None.
How chance the king comes with so small a train?

FOOL. And thou hadst been set i' th' stocks for that question, thou 'dst well deserv'd it.

KENT. Why, fool?

FOOL. We 'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there 's no labouring i' th' winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and there 's not a nose

50. dolours F_4 | Dolors $F_1F_2F_3$. — for thy F_1 | for thy deare F_2 | for thy dear F_3F_4 | from thy dear Theobald. 53. Hysterica F_4 | Historica Qq F_1F_2 | Hystorica F_3. 60. And Q_1Ff | An Pope | If Q_2.

50. The quibble between 'dolours' and 'dollars' (cf. *The Tempest*, II, i, 19) is helped by 'tell,' meaning 'count,' in the next line.

52. 'The mother' was a popular name for hysteria.

63. **to an ant**. The reference is to *Proverbs*, vi, 6–8.

64–66. The Fool does not know Kent, and so cannot conceive the motive of his action. Here, in characteristic fashion, he is satirizing Kent's adherence to the king, as showing him to be without either sight or smell; that is, as having no sense at all.

among twenty but can smell him that 's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes upward, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again; I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry; the fool will stay,
And let the wise man fly;
The knave turns fool that runs away,
The fool no knave, perdy.

KENT. Where learn'd you this, fool?

FOOL. Not i' th' stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR, *with* GLOUCESTER

LEAR. Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?
They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches;
The images of revolt and flying-off.
Fetch me a better answer.

68. following it Qq | following Ff. — **upward** Ff | vp the hill Qq. 82. Scene IX Pope. 83. **all the** Ff | hard to Qq.

78–79. In line 78 'fool' is generic, in line 79 the speaker refers to himself. Perhaps the Fool is using the trick of suggesting a thing by saying its opposite. Or he may be playing upon the two senses of 'knave,' one of which is 'servant,' often in this sense opposed to 'knight.' This would infer who the real fools in the world are. Coleridge says "a knave is a fool with a circumbendibus."

83. **fetches**: pretexts. Still in use in English dialect.

GLOUCESTER. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke;
How unremovable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

LEAR. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
'Fiery'? what 'quality'? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,
I 'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

GLOUCESTER. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

LEAR. 'Inform'd' them! Dost thou understand me, man?

GLOUCESTER. Ay, my good lord.

LEAR. The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear father
Would with his daughter speak; commands her service:
Are they 'inform'd' of this? My breath and blood!
'Fiery'? 'the fiery duke'? Tell the hot duke that —
No, but not yet; may be he is not well;
Infirmity doth still neglect all office
Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves
When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind
To suffer with the body. I 'll forbear;
And am fall'n out with my more headier will,
To take the indispos'd and sickly fit
For the sound man. [*Looking on* KENT]
Death on my state! wherefore

92, 93, 97. Qq omit. commands, tends, seruice Ff.
96. commands her service Qq | 106. [*Looking on* KENT] Johnson.

86. **fiery quality.** "It was Lear's own 'fiery quality' by which he had been accustomed to scorch all opposition out of his way; now he has to hear another man's 'fiery quality' quoted to him." — Moulton.

95–106. "The strong interest now felt by Lear, to try to find excuses for his daughter, is most pathetic." — Coleridge.

104. **more headier will**: too impetuous inclination.

Should he sit here? This act persuades me
That this remotion of the duke and her
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the duke and 's wife I 'd speak with them,
Now, presently; bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber-door I 'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

GLOUCESTER. I would have all well betwixt you. [*Exit*]

LEAR. O me, my heart, my rising heart! But, down!

FOOL. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when she put 'em i' th' paste alive; she knapp'd 'em o' th' coxcombs with a stick, and cried, 'Down, wantons, down!' 'T was her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, butter'd his hay.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants

LEAR. Good morrow to you both.

CORNWALL. Hail to your grace!

[KENT *is set at liberty*]

REGAN. I am glad to see your highness.

LEAR. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason
I have to think so. If thou shouldst not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
Sepulchring an adultress. [*To* KENT] O, are you free?
Some other time for that. Beloved Regan,

117. **knapp'd** | knapt Ff | rapt Qq.
121. Scene X Pope.
124. **mother's** | mother F1.
125. [*To* KENT] Rowe.

108. **remotion**: going from home. Cf. 'this remove,' line 4.

113. Till it kills sleep with noise and clamor.

116. **cockney**: squeamish person. The context suggests a connection etymologically with 'cook' (cf. 'the land of Cockaigne'), but this is very unlikely. See Murray for the interesting sense-history.

Thy sister 's naught. O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here:
[*Points to his heart*]
I can scarce speak to thee; thou 'lt not believe
With how deprav'd a quality — O Regan!

REGAN. I pray you, sir, take patience; I have hope
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.

LEAR. Say, how is that?

REGAN. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation. If, sir, perchance
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'T is on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As clears her from all blame.

LEAR. My curses on her!

REGAN. O, sir, you are old;
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine; you should be rul'd and led
By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than you yourself. Therefore, I pray you
That to our sister you do make return;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

LEAR. Ask her forgiveness?
Do you but mark how this becomes the house:

128. [*Points . . . heart*] Pope.
130. With how deprav'd Ff | Of how depriued Qq.
141. her | his F1.
145. her, sir | her Sir? Q1 | her Ff.
146. but Ff | Qq omit.

132–133. It is not so much her failure to do her duty as your failure to value her real worth. An interesting example of what Schmidt (*Lexicon*, page 1420) calls the 'duplication of negative words.'

146. How it comports with the order of the family or of the domestic relations, that the father should kneel to the child.

[*Kneeling*] 'Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg
That you 'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.'
REGAN. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:
Return you to my sister.
LEAR. [*Rising*] Never, Regan.
She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart.
All the stor'd vengeances of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness!
CORNWALL. Fie, sir, fie!
LEAR. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall and blast her pride!
REGAN. O the blest gods! so will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.
LEAR. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse;

147. [*Kneeling*] QqFf omit.
151. [*Rising*] Dyce.
153. **struck** Rowe | strooke Q_1F_1.
161. **blast her pride** Qq | blister Ff.

148. **Age is unnecessary**: an old man has no right to exist. Lear's pathetic irony might serve as a motto for certain latter-day theories as to the uselessness of old age. Johnson interpreted the expression as, "Old age has few wants."

156. **young bones**: unborn child. Cf. I, iv, 265–272.

157. **taking**: malignant, blasting. Cf. III, iv, 58; *Hamlet*, I, i, 163.

160. **fen-suck'd**. Cf. *The Tempest*, II, ii, 1–3; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 88–90.

161. **fall**. Malone took the verb as transitive in the sense of 'humble,' but it is undoubtedly intransitive.

Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness. Her eyes are fierce; but thine
Do comfort and not burn. 'T is not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in. Thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;
Thy half o' th' kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

REGAN. Good sir, to th' purpose.

LEAR. Who put my man i' th' stocks? [*Tucket within*]

CORNWALL. What trumpet 's that?

REGAN. I know 't, — my sister's; this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.

Enter OSWALD

Is your lady come?

' 165. **-hefted** Ff | hested Qq | hasted Q3 | -hearted Rowe Pope. 178. *Enter* OSWALD | Enter Steward Ff (after **stocks**).

165. **tender-hefted.** This expression has caused much discussion. Some interpret as 'set in a delicate handle or bodily frame,' 'heft' or 'haft' being an old word for 'handle.' Schmidt says: "Perhaps 'tender-hefted,' i.e. tender-handled, is equivalent to tender, gentle, to touch or to approach; of an easy and winning address, affable." 'To heft' is still used in the north of England and in Scottish dialect in the sense of 'to establish one's self' in a situation or place of residence. Cf. Allan Ramsay, *The Gentle Shepherd*, I, ii: "Ill nature hefts in souls that 's weak and poor." May 'tender-hefted' not mean 'that has established itself in tenderness'?

169. **scant my sizes**: reduce my allowances. From 'size' in this sense comes the English university term 'sizar.'

LEAR. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.
Out, varlet, from my sight!
CORNWALL. What means your grace?
LEAR. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good hope
Thou didst not know on 't. Who comes here? O heavens,

Enter GONERIL

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!
[*To* GONERIL] Art not asham'd to look upon this beard?
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?
GONERIL. Why not by th' hand, sir? How have I offended?
All 's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.
LEAR. O, sides, you are too tough!
Will you yet hold? How came my man i' th' stocks?
CORNWALL. I set him there, sir; but his own disorders
Deserv'd much less advancement.
LEAR. You! did you?
REGAN. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
If, till the expiration of your month,

180. **fickle** Qq | fickly F_1F_2 | sickly F_3F_4.
182. Scene XI Pope. — LEAR Ff | Gon. Qq. — **stock'd** | struck Q_1.
184. *Enter* GONERIL | in Ff after line 181.
187. [*To* GONERIL] Johnson.
188. **wilt thou** Qq | will you Ff.

179–180. Whose pride depends upon, or comes and goes with, the shifting favor of his mistress; who puts on airs or falls his crest according as she smiles or frowns upon him.
185. **Allow**: approve of. See note, I, iv, 195.
195. Since you are weak, be content to think yourself so.

You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me;
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.
LEAR. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' th' air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl, —
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest-born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom. [*Pointing at* OSWALD]
GONERIL. At your choice, sir.
LEAR. I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad.
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell.
We 'll no more meet, no more see one another.
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that 's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine; thou art a boil,

204. **owl** | owle QqF1 | howl Collier Furness. | blood in Qq.
206. **-blooded** Pope | -bloodied F1
211. [*Pointing at* OSWALD] Dyce.
217. **boil** Malone | byle Q2F1.

204. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, Collier's reading of 'howl' for 'owl' was adopted, as giving a more satisfactory climax and being a word Shakespeare often uses to express the outcries of human want or pain.

210. **sumpter**: drudge. Literally 'pack-horse driver,' or 'pack-horse.' "*Sommier* . . . a Sumpter-horse; (and generally any toyling, and load carrying, drudge, or groome)." — Cotgrave.

A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I 'll not chide thee;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it;
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.
Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure.
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

REGAN. Not altogether so;
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old; and so —
But she knows what she does.

LEAR. Is this well spoken?

REGAN. I dare avouch it, sir. What, fifty followers!
Is it not well? What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
Should many people under two commands,
Hold amity? 'T is hard; almost impossible.

GONERIL. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
From those that she calls servants or from mine?

REGAN. Why not, my lord? If then they chanc'd to slack you,
We could control them. If you will come to me —

218. an Qq | or Ff. 239. you Qq | ye Ff.

218. **embossed**: swollen, protuberant. Cf. *As You Like It*, II, vii, 67.
221. Latin epithets for Jove are *Tonans* and *Tonitrualis*.
233. **sith**: since. This old form is usually found in Shakespeare in the metaphorical meaning 'because.' See Abbott, § 132.
239. **slack you**: be lacking in their duties towards you.

For now I spy a danger — I entreat you
To bring but five-and-twenty; to no more
Will I give place or notice.

LEAR. I gave you all —

REGAN. And in good time you gave it.

LEAR. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number. What, must I come to you
With five-and-twenty, Regan? said you so?

REGAN. And speak 't again, my lord; no more with me.

LEAR. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,
When others are more wicked; not being the worst
Stands in some rank of praise. [*To* GONERIL] I 'll go with thee;
Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

GONERIL. Hear me, my lord;

252. [*To* GONERIL] Hanmer.

244. And in good time you gave it. This spurt of malice, snapped in upon Lear's pathetic appeal, is the *ne plus ultra* of human fiendishness. This cold, sharp venom of retort is what chiefly distinguishes Regan from Goneril; otherwise they seem too much like repetitions of each other to come fairly within the circle of nature, who never repeats herself. Dowden discriminates between them as follows:

> The two terrible creatures are distinguishable. Goneril is the calm wielder of a pitiless force, the resolute initiator of cruelty. Regan is a smaller, shriller, fiercer, more eager piece of malice. The tyranny of the elder sister is a cold, persistent pressure, as little affected by tenderness or scruple as the action of some crushing hammer; Regan's ferocity is more unmeasured, and less abnormal or monstrous.

250–251. Editors differ as to the punctuation here, some putting a full stop after 'well-favour'd,' and only a comma after 'wicked.'

What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

REGAN. What need one?

LEAR. O, reason not the need; our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need —
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags!
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall — I will do such things —
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I 'll weep;
No, I 'll not weep.
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart

261. **life is** Ff | life 's as Q_2 | life as Q_1.
266. **man** Ff | fellow Qq.
268. **stirs** F_4 | stirres QqF_1 | stir Rowe.
270. **tamely** Ff | lamely Qq.

259. **superfluous**: possessed of more than they need.
265. For the scansion of this line, see Abbott, § 476.
268. **that stirs.** "The relative ... frequently takes a singular verb though the antecedent be plural." — Abbott, § 427.

Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I 'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

[*Exeunt* LEAR, GLOUCESTER, KENT, *and* FOOL]

CORNWALL. Let us withdraw; 't will be a storm.

[*Storm and tempest*]

REGAN. This house is little; th' old man and his people
Cannot be well bestow'd.

GONERIL. 'T is his own blame; hath put himself from rest,
And must needs taste his folly.

REGAN. For his particular, I 'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

GONERIL. So am I purpos'd.
Where is my lord of Gloucester?

CORNWALL. Follow'd the old man forth. He is return'd.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER. The king is in high rage.

CORNWALL. Whither is he going?

GLOUCESTER. He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.

CORNWALL. 'T is best to give him way; he leads himself.

GONERIL. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

GLOUCESTER. Alack! the night comes on, and the high winds

280. [*Exeunt* . . . FOOL] Qq (substantially) | Exeunt Ff.
281. Scene XII Pope. — [*Storm and tempest*] Ff (after weeping, line 278).
289, 292. CORNWALL | Corn. Ff | Reg. (Re.) Qq.
290. *Re-enter* . . . | Enter . . . Ff (after line 288).
294. high Ff | bleak Q_1 | bleake Q_2.

279. flaws: fragments. Seemingly the original meaning. See Murray. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 415.

280. Or ere: before. For this pleonasm, see Abbott, § 131.

284. hath. The 'he' is implicit in 'his.'

286. For his particular: so far as he himself is concerned.

Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
There 's scarce a bush.

REGAN. O, sir, to wilful men
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors.
He is attended with a desperate train;
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abus'd, wisdom bids fear.

CORNWALL. Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night:
My Regan counsels well. Come out o' th' storm. [*Exeunt*]

295. **ruffle** Ff | russel Q1 | rustle Capell.

295. **ruffle**: bluster, become noisy and boisterous. Cf. *Titus Andronicus*, I, i, 313. A 'ruffler' was a 'cheating bully.'

298. **Shut up your doors.** "And Lear had thought that it was not in her 'to oppose the bolt' (line 170) against him." — Verity.

299. **a desperate train.** The Cowden Clarke comment is:

Regan's barefaced pretence, — insisting on speaking of her old father as still attended by a large train of followers, both in this speech and the one a little before, where she talks of there not being room for "th' old man and his people" (line 282), while in reality he has with him only his faithful Kent and Fool, — is thoroughly in character with her brassy nature.

300. **incense**: incite, provoke. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I, iii, 13.

301. **abus'd**: deceived. See note, IV, i, 22.

ACT III

Scene I. *A heath*

Storm still. Enter Kent *and a* Gentleman, *severally*

Kent. Who 's here, besides foul weather?

Gentleman. One minded, like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you. Where 's the king?

Gentleman. Contending with the fretful elements;
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,
That things might change or cease; tears his white hair,
Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;
Strives in his little world of man t' out-scorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.

A heath Rowe.
1. **Who 's** Ff | What 's Qq.
4. **elements** Ff | element Qq.
7-15. **tears . . . all** Qq | Ff omit.

Severally. This, the Folio stage direction, may be best explained by that of the Quartos, 'at seuerall doores.'

6. **main**: mainland. More often it means 'main sea.'

12. **cub-drawn**: sucked dry by her cubs, and hungry.

KENT. But who is with him?

GENTLEMAN. None but the fool; who labours to out-jest
His heart-struck injuries.

KENT. Sir, I do know you;
And dare, upon the warrant of my note,
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
Although as yet the face of it is cover'd
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;
Who have — as who have not, that their great stars
Thron'd and set high? — servants, who seem no less,
Which are to France the spies and speculations
Intelligent of our state. What hath been seen,
Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes,
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
Against the old kind king; or something deeper,
Whereof perchance these are but furnishings.
But true it is, from France there comes a power
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet
In some of our best ports, and are at point
To show their open banner. Now to you;

17. **-struck** Rowe | -strooke F_1F_2. Ff | Qq omit.
20. **is** Ff | be Qq. 27. **have** $F_2F_3F_4$ | hath F_1.
22-29. **Who have . . . furnishings** 30-42. **But . . . you** Qq | Ff omit.

18. **warrant of my note**: strength of my knowledge.

24–25. **speculations Intelligent of**: observers giving information about. The abstract is put for the concrete.

26. **snuffs**: offence-takings. — **packings**: underhand intrigues.

29. **furnishings**: trimmings, appendages, not the thing itself.

31. **scatter'd**: divided, disunited. Hanmer read 'shatter'd.'

32. **have secret feet**: have landed secretly.

33. **at point**: ready. Cf. *Cymbeline*, III, i, 30; III, vi, 17.

If on my credit you dare build so far
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
Some that will thank you, making just report
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
The king hath cause to plain.
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding;
And from some knowledge and assurance, offer
This office to you.

GENTLEMAN. I will talk further with you.

KENT. No, do not.
For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia —
As fear not but you shall — show her this ring;
And she will tell you who your fellow is
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
I will go seek the king.

GENTLEMAN. Give me your hand; have you no more to say?

KENT. Few words, but to effect, more than all yet;
That, when we 've found the king — in which your pain
That way, I 'll this —he that first lights on him
Holla the other. [*Exeunt severally*]

48. your Qq | that Ff.
53, 54. in which . . . I 'll this Ff | Ile this way, You that Qq | in which you take That way, I this Pope.
55. [*Exeunt severally*] Theobald | Exeunt QqFf.

35. **on my credit**: "the faith of what I say; not 'reputation,' since Kent, being disguised, is unknown to the other." — Verity.

45. **out-wall**: exterior. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I, ii, 48; *King John*, III, iii, 20; *Sonnets*, CXLVI, 4.

48. **fellow**: companion. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, III, iv, 84.

53–54. **your . . . this**: your effort lies that way; I 'll go this.

SCENE II. *Another part of the heath. Storm still.*

Enter LEAR *and* FOOL

LEAR. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once
That makes ingrateful man!

FOOL. O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle, in; ask thy daughters' blessing: here 's a night pities neither wise men nor fools.

Another . . . heath Capell. — *Storm still* Ff | Qq omit.
3. **drown'd** Qq | drown F1.
5. **of** Ff | to Qq.
7. **Strike** Ff | Smite Qq.
9. **makes** Ff | make Qq.
11. **ask** Ff | and aske Qq.
12-13. **wise men nor fools** | Wisemen, nor fooles F1 | wise man nor foole Qq.

2. **cataracts**. Murray says that the earliest meaning was 'the flood-gates of the heavens.' — **hurricanoes**. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, V, ii, 172. Drayton also uses this in the sense of 'waterspout.'

4. **thought-executing**: acting with the rapidity of thought. Cf. Prospero's command, "Come with a thought," *The Tempest*, IV, i, 164.

5. **Vaunt-couriers**: forerunners. Fr. *avant-coureur*.

8. **germens**: seeds. Cf. *Macbeth*, IV, i, 59; *The Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 489; *2 Henry IV*, I, i, 153–154. — **spill**: destroy.

9. **That makes**. For the relative with singular verb, see note, II, iv, 268. — **ingrateful**. Shakespeare also has 'ungrateful.'

10. **court holy-water**. "*Eau beniste de Court*, court holy water, faire words, flattering speeches . . . palpable cogging." — Cotgrave.

LEAR. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription: then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That will with two pernicious daughters join
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this! O! O! 'tis foul!

FOOL. He that has a house to put 's head in has a good head-piece.

The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make
Shall of a corn cry woe!
And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made mouths in a glass.

LEAR. No, I will be the pattern of all patience;
I will say nothing.

16. **tax** F_3F_4 | taxe F_1F_2 | taske Qq. ioin'd Qq.
22. **will . . . join** Ff | haue . . . 33. Scene III Pope.

18. **subscription**: submission, allegiance. Cf. I, ii, 19; III, vii, 64.

27–30. "The meaning, if it be worth a search, seems to be this: 'A man who prefers or cherishes a mean member in place of a vital one shall suffer enduring pain where others would suffer merely a twinge.' Lear had preferred Regan and Goneril to Cordelia." — Furness.

31–32. "This is the Fool's way of diverting attention after he has said something a little too pointed; the idea of a very pretty woman making faces in a looking-glass raises a smile." — Furness.

Enter KENT

KENT. Who 's there?

FOOL. Marry, here 's a wise man and a fool.

KENT. Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night
Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves. Since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard; man's nature cannot carry
Th' affliction nor the fear.

LEAR. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice. Hide thee, thou bloody hand;
Thou perjur'd, and thou simular of virtue
That art incestuous. Caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming

35. *Enter* KENT Ff (after line 32).
37. **are** Ff | sit Qq.
44. **fear** F3 | feare F1 | force Qq.
45. **pudder** Ff Furness | Powther Q1 | pother Johnson Globe Camb Delius | Thundring Q2.
49. **simular** Ff | simular man Qq.
50. **to** Ff | in Qq.

39. **Gallow**: frighten. An obsolete form of 'gally,' a word still heard in dialect and, according to Murray, in the whale fishery. 'Gallicrow' for 'scarecrow' is not uncommon in English county districts.

43–44. Man's nature cannot endure the dire distress, nor even the fear of it. So in *The Book of Common Prayer:* "Defend us from all dangers and mischiefs, and from the fear of them."

49. **simular**: simulator. As an adjective it occurs in *Cymbeline*, V, v, 200. A 'simulator' is one who puts on the show of what he is not, as a 'dissimulator' puts off the show of what he is.

Has practis'd on man's life. Close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
More sinn'd against than sinning.

KENT. Alack, bare-headed! 55
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest.
Repose you there; while I to this hard house —
More harder than the stones whereof 't is rais'd;
Which even but now, demanding after you, 60
Denied me to come in — return, and force
Their scanted courtesy.

LEAR. My wits begin to turn.
Come on, my boy; how dost, my boy? art cold?
I 'm cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange, 65
And can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That 's sorry yet for thee.

52. **Has** F_2 | Ha's F_1 | Hast Qq. 66. **And** Ff | That Qq.— **vile Pope** | vilde $Q_2F_1F_2$ | vild$Q_1F_3F_4$.
55. **than** F_4 | then F_1 | their Qq.

53. Shakespeare uses 'continent' in the literal, etymological sense of 'that which contains.' Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV, xiv, 40.

54. A 'summoner' ('sompnour') was an officer who brought offenders before an ecclesiastical tribunal. 'Cry grace' is 'pray for mercy.' Cf. *As You Like It*, III, v, 61. Lear is regarding the raging elements as the agents of the gods, calling criminals to judgment.

54–55. Tyrwhitt, followed by many editors, quotes the parallel in Sophocles, *Œdipus Coloneus*, 266–267: τά γ' ἔργα μου πεπονθότ' ἐστὶ μᾶλλον ἢ δεδρακότα, "my deeds are deeds of suffering rather than of doing."

66. An allusion to alchemy, which was supposed to have the power of transmuting vile metals into precious, as lead into gold.

FOOL. [*Singing*]

He that has and a little tiny wit,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
Though the rain it raineth every day.

LEAR. True, boy. Come, bring us to this hovel.

[*Exeunt* LEAR *and* KENT]

FOOL. I 'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter,
When brewers mar their malt with water,
When nobles are their tailors' tutors,
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors,
When every case in law is right,
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight,
When slanders do not live in tongues,
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs,
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion;

69. [*Singing*] QqFf omit.—**little tiny** | little tine Qq | little-tyne F_1F_2.
73. **boy** Ff | my good boy Qq.—[*Exeunt* . . . KENT] Capell | Exit Ff.
74-87. FOOL. **I 'll . . . time.** [*Exit*] Ff | Qq omit.

69–72. This snatch is a stanza, changed to suit the circumstances, of the song sung by Feste, the clown, at the close of *Twelfth Night*. —**and a little.** In old ballads 'and' is sometimes, as here, redundant, but adds a slight force to the expression, like 'even.' This usage is common in German, Swedish, and Dutch ballads. —**tiny.** For a note on the spelling in Quartos and Folios, see Skeat.

74–87. This passage, omitted in the Quartos, may be an interpolation by an actor who took the part of the Fool. Such interpolations were common, and Shakespeare humorously alludes to the practice in *Hamlet*, III, ii, 42–43: "And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them." The couplets are a kind of parody of *Chaucer's Prophecy*, a poem long attributed to Chaucer.

Then comes the time, who lives to see 't, 85
That going shall be us'd with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his time.
[*Exit*]

Scene III. Gloucester's *castle*

Enter Gloucester *and* Edmund

Gloucester. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desir'd their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charg'd me, on pain of perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, or any way sustain him. 5

Edmund. Most savage, and unnatural!

Gloucester. Go to; say you nothing. There is division betwixt the dukes; and a worse matter than that. I have receiv'd a letter this night; 't is dangerous to be spoken; I have lock'd the letter in my closet. These injuries the king now bears will be reveng'd home; there is part of a power already footed; we must incline to the king. I will look him, and privily relieve him; go you, and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceiv'd. If he ask for

Scene III | Scene IV Pope. — Gloucester's *castle* | QqFf omit. — *Enter* . . . Ff | Enter Gloster and the Bastard with lights Q1.
4. **perpetual** Ff | their Qq | their perpetual Jennens Globe.
5. **or** Ff | nor Qq.
7. **There is** Ff | There 's a Qq.
8. **betwixt** Qq | betweene Ff.
12. **look** Ff | seeke Qq.

87. "The dreamer Merlin and his prophecies" are referred to in *1 Henry IV*, III, i, 150. *The Birth of Merlin* is an apocryphal Shakespeare play. — **before his time.** "According to the old legend, King Lear was contemporary with Joash, King of Judah." — Moberly.

11. **home**: to the utmost, thoroughly. So in line 16 of next scene.

me, I am ill, and gone to bed. If I die for it, as no less is threaten'd me, the king my old master must be reliev'd. There is strange things toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful. [*Exit*]

EDMUND. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke
Instantly know; and of that letter too.
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses, — no less than all:
The younger rises when the old doth fall. [*Exit*]

SCENE IV. *The heath, near a hovel*

Enter LEAR, KENT, *and* FOOL

KENT. Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter;
The tyranny of the open night 's too rough
For nature to endure. [*Storm still*]

LEAR. Let me alone.

15. **bed.** **If** | bed, if Ff | bed, though Qq.
17. **strange things** Ff | some strange thing Qq.
SCENE IV | Scene V Pope. — *The heath . . . hovel* | QqFf omit.

17. **toward**: impending. See note, II, i, 10. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, i, 77.

19. **forbid**: forbidden. Cf. Gloucester's first speech. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare "forbid thee!" was the punctuation adopted, the phrase being interpreted as a curse.

Enter LEAR, . . . Coleridge has a famous note here:

O, what a world's convention of agonies is here! All external nature in a storm, all moral nature convulsed, — the real madness of Lear, the feigned madness of Edgar, the babbling of the Fool, the desperate fidelity of Kent, — surely such a scene was never conceived before or since! Take it but as a picture for the eye only, it is more terrific than any which a Michael Angelo, inspired by a Dante, could have conceived, and which none but a Michael Angelo could have executed. Or let it have been uttered to the blind, the howlings of nature would seem converted into the voice of conscious humanity.

KENT. Good my lord, enter here.
LEAR. Wilt break my heart?
KENT. I had rather break mine own. Good my lord, enter.
LEAR. Thou think'st 't is much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin: so 't is to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou 'dst shun a bear;
But if thy flight lay toward the roaring sea,
Thou 'dst meet the bear i' th' mouth. When the mind 's free,
The body 's delicate; the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to 't? But I will punish home.
No, I will weep no more. In such a night
To shut me out! Pour on; I will endure.
In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all, —
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
No more of that.
KENT. Good my lord, enter here.
LEAR. Prithee, go in thyself; seek thine own ease.
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. But I 'll go in.
In, boy; go first. You houseless poverty, —
Nay, get thee in. I 'll pray, and then I 'll sleep. [FOOL *goes in*]

7. **skin**: **so 't is** | skinso: 'tis F1.
10. **thy** | they F1. — **roaring** Ff | roring Q1 (some copies) | raging Q1 (some copies) Q2.
20. **gave** Ff | gaue you Qq.
26, 27. **In . . . sleep** Ff | Qq omit.
27. [FOOL *goes in*] Johnson | Exit Ff (after line 26).

26. **poverty**: poor people. This play has an unusual number of instances of the abstract put for the concrete.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

EDGAR. [*Within*] Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor Tom! [The FOOL *runs out from the hovel*]

FOOL. Come not in here, nuncle, here 's a spirit. Help me, help me!

KENT. Give me thy hand. Who 's there?

FOOL. A spirit, a spirit! he says his name 's poor Tom.

KENT. What art thou that dost grumble there i' th' straw? Come forth.

Enter EDGAR, *disguised as a madman*

EDGAR. Away! the foul fiend follows me!

Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.

29. **storm** Ff | night Qq.
31. **loop'd** | loopt Qq | lop'd Ff.
37, 38. Qq. omit. — Scene VI Pope. — Enter Edgar, and Foole Ff. — [*Within*] Theobald. — [The FOOL . . . *hovel*] Theobald.
46. **blows the cold wind** Qq | blow the winds Ff.

31. **loop'd.** The allusion is to loopholes, such as are found in ancient castles. Cf. *1 Henry IV*, IV, i, 71.

35. **superflux**: superfluity, surplus of wealth and comfort.

37. He pretends to be taking soundings at sea.

46. Cf. these lines from *The Friar of Orders Grey:*

> Through the hawthorn blows the cold wind,
> And drizzly rain doth fall.

Hum! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

LEAR. Didst thou give all to thy daughters? And art thou come to this? 49

EDGAR. Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, over bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inch'd bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold. O, do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now, and there, and there again, and there. [*Storm still*]

LEAR. Has his daughters brought him to this pass? 61 Couldst thou save nothing? Wouldst thou give 'em all?

FOOL. Nay, he reserv'd a blanket, else we had been all sham'd.

47. **cold bed** Qq | bed Ff.
48. **Didst thou give . . . thy** Ff | Hast thou given . . . thy two Qq.
51. **through fire** | though Fire F1. —**through flame** | Qq omit.
52. **ford** | foord Qq | Sword Ff.
61. **Has his** | Ha's his F1 | What, his Qq | What, have his Theobald.
62. **Wouldst thou give 'em** Ff | Didst thou give them Qq.

47. A proverb. Cf. *The Taming of the Shrew*, Induction, i, 10: "Go by, Jeronimy; go to thy cold bed, and warm thee."

53–54. Cf. Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, VI, 21–23:

> Then swords and knives,
> Poison, gun, halters, and envenomed steel
> Are laid before me to despatch myself.

56. The five 'wits' as distinct from the 'senses' (cf. *Sonnets*, CXLI, 9–10) are, according to Stephen Hawes, *The Pastime of Pleasure*, XXIV, 2, common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, and memory.

57. **do de, do de.** To represent shivering and teeth-chattering.

58. **taking**: blasting, infecting. See note, II, iv, 157.

LEAR. Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!

KENT. He hath no daughters, sir.

LEAR. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd nature
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
Is it the fashion that discarded fathers
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
Judicious punishment! 't was this flesh begot
Those pelican daughters.

EDGAR. Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill.

Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

FOOL. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

EDGAR. Take heed o' th' foul fiend: obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; set not thy sweet heart on proud array. Tom 's a-cold.

LEAR. What hast thou been?

EDGAR. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curl'd my hair, wore gloves in my cap, swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven. Wine lov'd I deeply, dice dearly, and in woman out-paramour'd

74. **Pillicock-hill** Rowe | Pillicock hill Ff | pelicock's hill Qq.
75. **Halloo** Theobald | Alow Ff.
78. **word justly** Pope | words justly Qq | words Iustice Ff.
84. **deeply** Qq | deerely F_1F_2.

73. The belief that the pelican fed its young with its own blood belongs to the fictitious natural history which is one of the characteristics of euphuism. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, v, 146; *Richard II*, II, i, 126.

74. 'Pillicock,' suggested by 'pelican,' is an old term of endearment. Collier quotes from *Gammer Gurton's Garland:*

> Pillycock, Pillycock, sat on a hill;
> If he 's not gone, he sits there still.

82. Gloves were often worn in the cap, either as the favor of a mistress, or as the memorial of a friend, or as a badge to be challenged.

the Turk; false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman. Keep thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend.

Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind. 90

Says suum, mun, ha, no, nonny. Dolphin my boy, boy, sessa! let him trot by. [*Storm still*]

LEAR. Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncover'd body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here 's three on 's are sophisticated! Thou art the thing itself; unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, fork'd animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! come, unbutton here. [*Tearing off his clothes*]

FOOL. Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 't is a naughty night to swim in. Now a little fire in a wide field were like an old lecher's heart, a small spark, all the rest on 's body cold. Look, here comes a walking fire. 104

91–92. ha, no | Ff omit. — **my boy, boy** Ff | boy, my boy Qq. — **sessa! let** | Sesey: let F1 | caese let Q1 | cease let Q2. — [*Storm still*] Ff | Qq omit.

93. Why Qq | Ff omit. — **thy** Qq | **a** Ff.

100. come . . . here Ff | come on be true Q1 (some copies) Q2. — [*Tearing . . . clothes*] Rowe.

85. light of ear: "foolishly credulous." — Schmidt.

91–92. This was undoubtedly intended as gibberish, but attempts have been made to interpret it as a blend of an imitation of the whistling wind, a line of an old song, and a plowboy's talk to his horse. 'Sessa' (interpreted by some as an exhortation to speed; derived by Johnson from Fr. *cessez*, 'cease!') occurs again in III, vi, 72.

96–97. cat: civet-cat. — **sophisticated**: adulterated, not the real thing.

Enter GLOUCESTER *with a torch*

EDGAR. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web and the pin, squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.

Saint Withold footed thrice the old;
He met the night-mare and her nine-fold;
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

KENT. How fares your grace?

LEAR. What 's he?

105. *Enter . . . torch* Ff (after line 100). — **Flibbertigibbet** Ff | Sriberdegibit Q_1 | Sirberdegibit Q_2.
106. **till the** Qq | at Ff.
109. **Saint Withold** Theobald | Swithold Ff | swithald Qq.
110. **He . . . night-mare** FfQ_1 (some copies) | a nellthu night more Q_1 (some copies).
115. Scene VII Pope.

105. **Flibbertigibbet.** "Frateretto, Fleberdigibet, Hoberdidance, Tocobatto, were four deuils of the round, or Morrice." — Harsnet.

106. It was an old tradition that spirits were relieved from confinement at the time of curfew, and permitted to wander at large till the first cock-crowing. Hence, in *The Tempest*, V, i, 40, they are said to "rejoice to hear the solemn curfew." Cf. *Hamlet*, I, i, 157.

106–107. **the web and the pin.** An old name for 'cataract.' Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, I, ii, 291: "All eyes Blind with the pin and web."

107–108. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 416–421.

109. Saint Withold has been identified with Saint Vitalis, the traditional protector from nightmare, and this stanza is probably an old incantation against an attack. — **old.** A variant (now provincial) of 'wold,' the word so often used by Tennyson to describe the open, treeless slopes between sea and moorland.

110. **nine-fold**: "nine familiars, in the form of foals." — Herford.

112. **troth plight**: pledge her word to do no harm.

113. 'Aroint thee,' an expression of uncertain origin, seems to have been used as an exorcism against witchcraft. Cf. *Macbeth*, I, iii, 6.

KENT. Who 's there? What is 't you seek?

GLOUCESTER. What are you there? Your names?

EDGAR. Poor Tom, that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool; who is whipp'd from tithing to tithing, and stock-punish'd, and imprison'd; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body;

> Horse to ride, and weapon to wear; 125
> But mice and rats, and such small deer,
> Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin; peace, thou fiend!

GLOUCESTER. What, hath your grace no better company?

EDGAR. The prince of darkness is a gentleman, 130
Modo he 's call'd, and Mahu.

GLOUCESTER. Our flesh and blood, my lord, is grown so vile
That it doth hate what gets it.

EDGAR. Poor Tom 's a-cold.

119. **tadpole** Johnson | Tod-pole F_1F_2. — **fury** | fruite Q_2.
123. **stock-punish'd** Qq Pope Capell Globe | stockt, punish'd Ff. — **hath had** Qq | hath Ff.
128. **Smulkin** Ff | snulbug Qq.
130, 131. Prose in QqFf.
132. **my . . . vile** | my Lord, is growne so vilde F_1 | is growne so vild my Lord Qq.

119. **wall-newt and the water**: lizard and water newt.

120. 'Sallet' was a common Elizabethan form of 'salad.'

122–123. **tithing to tithing**: district to district, parish to parish.

126–127. This couplet is slightly altered from one in the old metrical romance, *The Life of Sir Bevis of Hamptoun*.

128. "Names of the punie spirits . . . Smolkin, Hillio." — Harsnet.

131. "Maho and Modu . . . generals of . . . furies." — Harsnet.

134. Gloucester has been alluding to his son as well as to Lear's daughters, and this makes Edgar the more anxious for his disguise, lest his feelings should mar his counterfeiting.

GLOUCESTER. Go in with me; my duty cannot suffer
T' obey in all your daughters' hard commands.
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventur'd to come seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

LEAR. First let me talk with this philosopher.
What is the cause of thunder?

KENT. Good my lord, take his offer; go into th' house.

LEAR. I 'll talk a word with this same learned Theban.
What is your study?

EDGAR. How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

LEAR. Let me ask you one word in private.

KENT. Importune him once more to go, my lord;
His wits begin t' unsettle.

GLOUCESTER. Canst thou blame him?

[*Storm still*]

His daughters seek his death. Ah, that good Kent!
He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!
Thou sayest the king grows mad; I 'll tell thee, friend,
I am almost mad myself. I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,
But lately, very late. I lov'd him, friend,
No father his son dearer; true to tell thee,

142. Cf. Chaucer, *The Squieres Tale*, 258–261:

> As sore wondren somme on cause of thonder,
> On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on mist,
> And alle thing, til that the cause is wist,
> Thus Iangle they and demen and devyse.

144. **Theban.** Vaguely for 'philosopher.' Cf. 'Athenian,' line 167.

154. Outlawry involved "corruption of blood," i.e. disability to inherit or bequeath. Edgar is now learning the true state of affairs.

The grief hath craz'd my wits. What a night 's this! —
I do beseech your grace, —

LEAR. O, cry you mercy, sir.
Noble philosopher, your company.

EDGAR. Tom 's a-cold.

GLOUCESTER. In, fellow, there, into th' hovel; keep thee warm.

LEAR. Come, let 's in all.

KENT. This way, my lord.

LEAR. With him;
I will keep still with my philosopher.

KENT. Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.

GLOUCESTER. Take him you on.

KENT. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

LEAR. Come, good Athenian.

GLOUCESTER. No words, no words; hush.

EDGAR. Child Rowland to the dark tower came;
His word was still, 'Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man.' [*Exeunt*]

169. **tower** Ff | towne Qq.— **came** Ff | come Qq.

158. **your grace.** "Here Gloucester attempts to lead Lear towards the shelter he has provided in the farm-house adjoining the castle, but the king will not hear of quitting his 'philosopher.'" — Cowden Clarke. — **cry you mercy.** Cf. III, ii, 53–54; III, vi, 50.

169. From this line Browning developed his well-known tone-poem. So Tennyson developed *Mariana* from a single line in *Measure for Measure*. 'Child Rowland' is probably for 'Knight Orlando' of the Charlemagne romances. Edgar's snatch is made up of a line from a lost ballad (cf. Child's *English and Scottish Ballads*, edition of 1864, I, 146), and a familiar fragment from *Jack and the Giants*. 'His word,' of course, refers to the giant. For 'British man' for 'Englishman,' see Introduction, Date of Composition.

SCENE V. GLOUCESTER'S *castle*

Enter CORNWALL *and* EDMUND

CORNWALL. I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

EDMUND. How, my lord, I may be censur'd, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

CORNWALL. I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death, but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reprovable badness in himself. 7

EDMUND. How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector! 11

CORNWALL. Go with me to the duchess.

EDMUND. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand. 14

CORNWALL. True or false, it hath made thee Earl of

SCENE V | Scene VIII Pope. — GLOUCESTER'S *castle* Rowe.
1. **his** Ff | the Qq.
9. **letter** Qq | **letter which** Ff.
11. **this . . . not** Ff | **his treason were** Qq.

SCENE V. "The intervention of the fifth scene is particularly judicious, — the interruption allowing an interval for Lear to appear in full madness in the sixth scene." — Coleridge.

6. **provoking merit.** Cornwall means, apparently, a virtue apt to be provoked, or stirred into act; which virtue was set to work by some flagrant evil in Gloucester himself. 'Provoking' for 'provokable,' the active form with the passive sense. Crosby interprets 'merit' in the sense of 'desert': "It was not altogether your brother Edgar's evil disposition that made him seek his father's death: it was the old man's desert that provoked him to it; that is, the old man deserved it."

Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

Edmund. [*Aside*] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully. — I will persever in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood. 21

Cornwall. I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. [*Exeunt*]

Scene VI. *A chamber in a farmhouse adjoining the castle*

Enter Gloucester, Lear, Kent, Fool, *and* Edgar

Gloucester. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can; I will not be long from you.

Kent. All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience. The gods reward your kindness! 5

[*Exit* Gloucester]

Edgar. Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler

18. [*Aside*] Theobald.
19. persever $F_1F_2F_3$ | perseuere QqF_4.
23. dearer Qq | deere F_1F_2.
Scene VI | Scene IX Pope. — *A chamber ... castle* Globe. — *Enter* ... Edgar | Enter Kent, and Gloucester Ff.
5. reward Ff | deserue Qq | preserve Capell conj. — [*Exit* Gloucester] Exit Ff (after line 3). — Enter Lear, Edgar, and Foole Ff.

18. **comforting**: aiding. Formerly common in legal use.

19. **persever**. The only form in Shakespeare. Accent on penult.

4. **have**. Plural by the attraction of 'wits.' See Abbott, § 412.

6. **Frateretto**. See quotation from Harsnet, III, iv, 105. — **Nero**. In Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Nero is described as a performer on the *viella* (a kind of hurdy-gurdy) in hell, and Trajan as an angler for frogs.

in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

FOOL. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman?

LEAR. A king, a king!

FOOL. No, he 's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he 's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

LEAR. To have a thousand with red burning spits
Come hizzing in upon 'em, —

EDGAR. The foul fiend bites my back.

FOOL. He 's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love.

LEAR. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight.
[*To* EDGAR] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer;
[*To* FOOL] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she foxes!

EDGAR. Look, where he stands and glares! Want'st thou eyes at trial, madam?

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me.

12-15. FOOL. **No . . . him.** LEAR Ff | Qq omit.
16. **hizzing** Ff | hiszing Q_1 | hissing Q_2.
17-54. EDGAR. **The foul . . . scape** Qq | Ff omit.
21. [*To* EDGAR] Capell. — **justicer** Theobald | iustice Qq.
22. [*To* FOOL] Capell. — **Now** Q_2 | no Q_1.
23. **Want'st** | wantst Q_2 | wanst Q_1 | Wantest Theobald.

7. 'Innocent' is a word often applied euphemistically to fools and weak-minded persons. Cf. *All 's Well that End 's Well*, IV, iii, 213.

12–14. The efforts made by Shakespeare and his father to obtain a coat of arms from the College of Heralds form a curious commentary on this passage. See Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, Chapter XII.

23–24. When Edgar says, "Look, where he stands and glares!" he seems to be speaking in the character of a madman, who thinks he sees the fiend. "Want'st thou eyes at trial, madam?" is addressed

FOOL. Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak
Why she dares not come over to thee.

EDGAR. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. Hoppedance cries in Tom's belly for two white herring. Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

KENT. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amaz'd;
Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

LEAR. I 'll see their trial first. Bring in the evidence.
[*To* EDGAR] Thou robed man of justice, take thy place,
[*To* FOOL] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,
Bench by his side. [*To* KENT] You are o' th' commission,
Sit you too.

EDGAR. Let us deal justly.

Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth
Thy sheep shall take no harm.
Pur! the cat is gray.

LEAR. Arraign her first; 't is Goneril. I here take my

25. **bourn** | boorne Capell | broome Qq | brook Jennens (Johnson conj.).
34. **the** Pope | their Qq.
35, 36, 37. [*To* EDGAR] [*To* FOOL] [*To* KENT] Capell.
40-43. Prose in Qq.

to some visionary person who is supposed, apparently, to be on trial, but does not see the spectre.

25. From an old song which seems to have been imitated by William Birch in his *Dialogue between Elizabeth and England*, 1558. 'Bourn' here means 'stream' ('burn'), and Skeat and Murray recognize it as etymologically a distinct word from 'bourn' meaning 'boundary,' as in IV, vi, 57; *Hamlet*, III, i, 79; *The Tempest*, II, i, 152.

30. **Hoppedance.** See quotation from Harsnet, III, iv, 105.

42. **minikin**: delicate, dainty. A term of endearment.

44. 'Purre' happens to be the name of a demon in Harsnet.

oath before this honourable assembly, she kick'd the poor king her father.

FOOL. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

LEAR. She cannot deny it.

FOOL. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

LEAR. And here 's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim
What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!
Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her scape?

EDGAR. Bless thy five wits!

KENT. O pity! Sir, where is the patience now
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

EDGAR. [*Aside*] My tears begin to take his part so much,
They mar my counterfeiting.

LEAR. The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me.

EDGAR. Tom will throw his head at them. Avaunt, you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,
Tooth that poisons if it bite;
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,
Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail,
Tom will make him weep and wail;

46. **she** | Q_1 omits.
58. [*Aside*] Rowe.
59. **They** Ff | Theile Q_1 | They 'l Q_2.
67. **lym** Hanmer | him Q_1 | Him Q_2 | Hym Ff.
68. **tike** QqF_4 | tight $F_1F_2F_3$. — **trundle** Q_2 | Trondle Ff.
69. **him** Ff | them Qq.

50. "A common old proverbial phrase." — Halliwell-Phillipps.

67. **lym.** This is Hanmer's emendation of the Folio 'Hym.' It is a rare form of 'lyam-hound' ('lyme-hound'), an obsolete name for 'bloodhound,' from 'lyam' ('lyme,' 'lime,' etc.), a 'leash' for hounds.

68. **trundle-tail**: a dog with a curled tail.

For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leapt the hatch, and all are fled.

Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes and fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

LEAR. Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts? [*To* EDGAR] You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred; only I do not like the fashion of your garments: you will say they are Persian; but let them be chang'd.

KENT. Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

LEAR. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains; so, so. We 'll go to supper i' th' morning.

FOOL. And I 'll go to bed at noon.

71. **leapt** Ff | leape Qq.
75. **makes** Qq | make Ff.
76. [*To* EDGAR] Capell.
78. **Persian** Ff | Persian attire Qq.
82. **so, so** Ff | so, so, so Qq. — **morning** Ff | morning, so, so, so Qq.

73. **horn is dry.** "Bedlam beggars wore about their necks a great horn of an oxe in a string or bawdric, which, when they came to an house for almes, they did wind; and they did putt the drink given them into this horn, whereto they did putt a stopple." — Aubrey, *Natural History of Wiltshire.*

74–79. Bucknill, in *The Psychology of Shakespeare*, says:

Lear is comparatively tranquil in conduct and language during the whole period of Edgar's mad companionship. It is only after the Fool has disappeared — gone to sleep at midday, as he says — and Edgar has left, to be the guide of his blind father, that the king becomes absolutely wild and incoherent. Few things tranquillize the insane more than the companionship of the insane. It is a fact not easily explicable.

78. **Persian.** Probably a topical allusion. A Persian embassy visited London early in James I's reign. Cf. Horace's *Persicos apparatus.*

83. These words are the last we have from the Fool. Though the expression is found elsewhere in the Elizabethan drama, it carries with it here a suggestion that the poor fellow's heart is breaking.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER. Come hither, friend; where is the king my master?

KENT. Here, sir; but trouble him not; his wits are gone.

GLOUCESTER. Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms;
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him.
There is a litter ready; lay him in 't,
And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet
Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master;
If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,
With thine, and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assured loss. Take up, take up;
And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

KENT. Oppress'd nature sleeps.
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews,
Which, if convenience will not allow,
Stand in hard cure. [*To* FOOL] Come, help to bear thy master;
Thou must not stay behind.

GLOUCESTER. Come, come, away.

[*Exeunt all but* EDGAR]

EDGAR. When we our betters see bearing our woes,

84. *Re-enter* . . . | Enter Gloster Ff (after line 79).
89. **toward** Ff | towards Qq.
95-99. KENT. **Oppress'd . . . behind.** GLOUCESTER | Ff omit.
96. **sinews** Qq | senses Theobald.
98. [*To* FOOL] Theobald.
99. [*Exeunt* . . . EDGAR] Globe | Exeunt Ff | Exit Qq.
100-113. Ff omit.

98. **Stand in hard cure**: can hardly be cured. Cf. the expression "stand in bold cure," *Othello*, II, i, 51.

100–113. "Internal evidence is conclusive against the supposition that the lines were written by Shakespeare."— Camb. On the other

We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers suffers most i' the mind,
Leaving free things and happy shows behind;
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend makes the king bow;
He childed as I father'd! Tom, away!
Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray,
When false opinion, whose wrong thoughts defile thee,
In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.
What will hap more to-night, safe scape the king!
Lurk, lurk. [*Exit*]

Scene VII. Gloucester's *castle*

Enter Cornwall, Regan, Goneril, Edmund, *and* Servants

Cornwall. Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter. The army of France is landed. Seek out the traitor Gloucester. [*Exeunt some of the* Servants]

110. **thoughts defile** Qq | thought defiles Theobald.
113. [*Exit*] Qq omit.
Scene VII | Scene VI Rowe. — Gloucester's *castle* Rowe. — *Enter* ... Edmund ... | Enter ... Bastard ... Ff.
3. **traitor** Ff | vilaine Q1 | villaine Q2. — [*Exeunt some of the* Servants] Capell.

hand, Delius defends the Shakespearian authorship on the internal evidence, and says:

> The poet lays great stress on the parallelism existing between the families of Lear and Gloucester, and takes this opportunity of impressing it again upon his audience. A mere interpolator would hardly have known of this peculiar tendency of the poet, or have carried it out so thoroughly, and in so pregnant a manner, as in the few but thoroughly Shakespearian words, "He childed as I father'd!"

109. **high noises**: sounds of alarm. — **bewray**. See note, II, i, 107.

REGAN. Hang him instantly.

GONERIL. Pluck out his eyes.

CORNWALL. Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund, keep you our sister company; the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke, where you are going, to a most festinate preparation; we are bound to the like. Our posts shall be swift and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister; farewell, my lord of Gloucester.

Enter OSWALD

How now! where 's the king?

OSWALD. My lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence.
Some five or six and thirty of his knights,
Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;
Who, with some other of the lords dependants,
Are gone with him toward Dover, where they boast
To have well-armed friends.

CORNWALL. Get horses for your mistress.

GONERIL. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

9. **Advise** | Advice F1. — **festinate** F2 | festiuate F1 | festuant Qq.
13. *Enter* OSWALD Collier | Enter Steward Ff.
16. **questrists** Ff | questrits Qq | questers Pope.
17. **lords** QqFf | lord's Pope.
18. **toward** Ff | towards Qq.

9. **festinate**: hasty. "Shakespeare uses 'festinately' as an affected word in *Love's Labour's Lost*, III, i, 6." — Delius.

11. **intelligent**: bearing intelligence. Cf. III, i, 25.

12. **lord of Gloucester**. He means Edmund, who is now invested with his father's titles. Oswald, speaking immediately after, refers to the father by the same title.

16. **questrists**: pursuers. Probably a Shakespearian 'nonce word.'

17. **lords dependants**: dependent lords. Those who read 'lord's' interpret 'followers of the Earl of Gloucester.'

CORNWALL. Edmund, farewell.
[*Exeunt* GONERIL, EDMUND, *and* OSWALD]
Go seek the traitor Gloucester,
Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.
[*Exeunt other* Servants]
Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice, yet our power
Shall do a court'sy to our wrath, which men
May blame, but not control. Who 's there? the traitor?

Enter GLOUCESTER *and* Servants

REGAN. Ingrateful fox! 't is he.
CORNWALL. Bind fast his corky arms.
GLOUCESTER. What mean your graces? Good my friends, consider
You are my guests; do me no foul play, friends.
CORNWALL. Bind him, I say. [Servants *bind him*]
REGAN. Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!
GLOUCESTER. Unmerciful lady as you are, I 'm none.
CORNWALL. To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt find — [REGAN *plucks his beard*]
GLOUCESTER. By the kind gods, 't is most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

21. [*Exeunt* . . . OSWALD] Dyce | Exit Ff (after line 20).
22. [*Exeunt* . . . Servants] Capell.
25. court'sy | curt-sie Ff.
26. Scene XI Pope.
27. *Enter* GLOUCESTER *and* Servants Ff | Enter Gloucester brought in by two or three Qq.
31. [Servants . . . | QqFf omit.
33. [REGAN . . . *beard*] Johnson.

23. **pass upon**: pass sentence (i.e. of death) upon.

25. **do a court'sy to**. Either (1) 'bend to,' 'yield to,' 'obey'; or (2) 'indulge,' 'gratify,' 'show complaisance to.'

28. **corky**: withered, shrivelled. This rare adjective occurs in Harsnet in the expression "an old corkie woman."

REGAN. So white, and such a traitor!
GLOUCESTER. Naughty lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,
Will quicken and accuse thee. I am your host;
With robbers' hands my hospitable favours
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?
CORNWALL. Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?
REGAN. Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth.
CORNWALL. And what confederacy have you with the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?
REGAN. To whose hands have you sent the lunatic king? Speak.
GLOUCESTER. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that 's of a neutral heart,
And not from one oppos'd.
CORNWALL. Cunning.
REGAN. And false.
CORNWALL. Where hast thou sent the king?
GLOUCESTER. To Dover.
REGAN. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charg'd at peril —
CORNWALL. Wherefore to Dover? Let him answer that.
GLOUCESTER. I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course.

42. **simple-answer'd** Hanmer | simple answer'd Ff | simple answerer Qq. 45. **have you** Qq | you haue Ff. 52. **answer** Ff | first answer Qq.

38. **quicken**: become alive. Cf. 'the quick and the dead.'
39. **my hospitable favours**: the features of me your host.
53. The allusion is to bear-baiting. Cf. *Macbeth*, V, vii, 2.

REGAN. Wherefore to Dover?

GLOUCESTER. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endur'd, would have buoy'd up,
And quench'd the stelled fires.
Yet, poor old heart, he holp the heavens to rain.
If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
Thou shouldst have said, 'Good porter, turn the key.'
All cruels else subscribe; but I shall see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

CORNWALL. See 't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair!
Upon these eyes of thine I 'll set my foot.

GLOUCESTER. He that will think to live till he be old,
Give me some help! O cruel! O you gods!

REGAN. One side will mock another; th' other too.

CORNWALL. If you see vengeance, —

1 SERVANT. Hold your hand, my lord!

54. **Dover** Ff | Dover, sir Qq.
57. **stick** Ff | rash Qq.
61. **holp** Ff | holpt Qq.—**rain** F_3F_4 | raine F_1F_2 | rage Qq.
64. **subscribe** Ff | subscrib'd Qq.
67. **these** Ff | those Qq.
71, 75, 78. 1 SERVANT | Seruant Qq | Ser. (Seru.) Ff.

57. **stick**. 'Rash,' the Quarto reading, is a word used by Spenser It means 'strike obliquely,' as a boar with its tusk.

59. **buoy'd up**. Either (1) 'raised itself up'; or (2) 'risen up.'

60. **stelled**. Either (1) 'starry'; or (2) 'fixed,' as in *Sonnets*, XXIV, 1

62. **stern**. The Quartos read 'dearne,' meaning 'dreary,' 'dread.'

64. **All cruels else subscribe**. A difficult passage. See Furness for conflicting interpretations. Some editors make it part of the address to the porter. May it not mean simply, All other cruelties surrender (to this, the master cruelty)? Cf. the meaning of 'subscrib'd,' I, ii, 19.

I 've serv'd you ever since I was a child;
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

REGAN. How now, you dog!

1 SERVANT. If you did wear a beard upon your chin, 75
I 'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean?

CORNWALL. My villain! [*They draw and fight*]

1 SERVANT. Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

REGAN. Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus!
[*Takes a sword, and runs at him behind*]

1 SERVANT. O, I am slain! My lord, you have one eye left
To see some mischief on him. O! [*Dies*]

CORNWALL. Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!
Where is thy lustre now? 83

77. [*They draw and fight*] Draw and fight Qq | Ff omit.
78. **Nay** Ff | Why Qq.
79. [*Takes . . .* | She takes . . . Qq | Killes him Ff.
81. [*Dies*] He dies Q2 | Q1Ff omit.

76. **What do you mean?** "Should not these words be given to Cornwall?" — Furness.

77. **villain**: bondman, serf. A feudal term, like 'varlet,' 'vassal.'

83. The brutality of this scene is commented on by Coleridge thus: "I will not disguise my conviction that, in this one point, the tragic in this play has been urged beyond the outermost mark and *ne plus ultra* of the dramatic." And again: "What shall I say of this scene? There is my reluctance to think Shakespeare wrong, and yet —." Dowden's criticism is:

> The treachery of Edmund, and the torture to which Gloucester is subjected, are out of the course of familiar experience; but they are commonplace and prosaic in comparison with the inhumanity of the sisters, and the agony of Lear. When we have climbed the steep ascent of Gloucester's mount of passion, we see still above us another *via dolorosa* leading to that 'wall of eagle-baffling mountain, black, wintry, dead, unmeasured,' to which Lear is chained. Thus the one story of horror serves as a means of approach to the other, and helps us to conceive its magnitude.

GLOUCESTER. All dark and comfortless. Where 's my son Edmund?
Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature
To quit this horrid act!
REGAN. Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee; it was he
That made the overture of thy treasons to us,
Who is too good to pity thee.
GLOUCESTER. O my follies! then Edgar was abus'd.
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!
REGAN. Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover. [*Exit one with* GLOUCESTER] How is 't, my lord? how look you?
CORNWALL. I have receiv'd a hurt; follow me, lady.
Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace;
Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm.
[*Exit* CORNWALL, *led by* REGAN]
2 SERVANT. I 'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man come to good.
3 SERVANT. If she live long,

85. **enkindle** Ff | vnbridle Qq.
93. [*Exit one . . .* | Exit . . . Ff.
97. [*Exit . . .* | Exeunt Ff.
98–106. 2 SERVANT. **I 'll never . . . help him!** | Ff omit.
98. 2 SERVANT | Seruant Qq | 1 Serv. Theobald.
99. 3 SERVANT | 3 S. Capell | 2 Seruant Qq.
99–101. **If . . . monsters** | Prose in Qq.

86. **quit**: requite, revenge. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 68.

98–106. Omitted in the Folios. See note, IV, vii, 85–97.

99–101. Heraud, in *Shakespeare: his Inner Life*, says:

The Poet might have justified the act by the supposed barbarity of the legendary age whose manners he was tracing, and urged that their familiarity with such acts prevented the actors in them from recognizing the horrible. No such thing. By inserting in the group a servant who *did* recognize its

And in the end meet the old course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.

2 SERVANT. Let 's follow the old earl, and get the Bedlam
To lead him where he would; his roguish madness
Allows itself to any thing.

3 SERVANT. Go thou; I 'll fetch some flax and whites of eggs
T' apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him!

[*Exeunt severally*]

102. 2 SERVANT | 2 S. Capell | 1 Ser. Qq.
105. 3 SERVANT | 3 S. Capell | 2 Ser. Qq.
106. [*Exeunt severally*] Theobald | Exit Qq.

intrinsic horror, and compassionated the sufferer, he converted disgust into pity. The valiant menial revenges on the spot the wrong done to humanity. The other servants also compassionate the blind old man, to lead him out, to help him, to heal his wounds, and to place him in safe custody. The entire current of feeling is turned in the direction of pity by the force of sympathy. Thus the horror in the 'horrid act' is mitigated, and reduced to the level of terror.

100. **meet the old course of death**: die a natural death. Bishop Charles Wordsworth in *Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible* says:

We find the same idea in the mouth of Moses with reference to the fate of the rebels Korah and his company: "If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me."—*Numbers*, xvi, 29.

105. **flax and whites of eggs**. Steevens held that in *The Case is Altered* Ben Jonson ridiculed this passage, but Gifford showed that, apart from the fact that the matter of dates makes the charge against Jonson fall to the ground, there is in Jonson's play, as here in *King Lear*, an "allusion to a method of cure common to every barber-surgeon and old woman in the kingdom."

ACT IV

SCENE I. *The heath*

Enter EDGAR

EDGAR. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts. But who comes here?

Enter GLOUCESTER, *led by an* OLD MAN

My father, poorly led? World, world, O world!

The heath Capell | QqFf omit.
1. **and known** | unknown Collier.
2. **flatter'd. To** Pope | flattered to Qq | flatter'd, to Ff.
4. **esperance** Ff | experience Qq.
6-9. **Welcome . . . blasts** | Qq omit.
10. *Enter* . . . | Enter Glouster, and an Oldman Ff (after **blasts**).

3. **dejected thing of**: thing cast down by.

4. **esperance**: hope. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, V, ii, 121.

5–6. Because, when the worst has come, there can be no further change but for the better. 'Laughter' is an instance of the effect put for the cause.

9. Is not indebted to thy blasts for any favor shown him; they have done their worst upon him, and so absolved him from all obligations.

But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.

OLD MAN. O, my good lord,
I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant,
These fourscore years.

GLOUCESTER. Away get thee away; good friend, be gone.
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;
Thee they may hurt.

OLD MAN. You cannot see your way.

GLOUCESTER. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes.
I stumbl'd when I saw. Full oft 't is seen,
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities. O dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I 'd say I had eyes again!

OLD MAN. How now! Who 's there?

EDGAR. [*Aside*] O gods! Who is 't can say, 'I am at the worst'?
I am worse than e'er I was.

OLD MAN. 'T is poor mad Tom.

12-14. **O . . . years** | Prose in Qq. 21. **O** | Oh Ff | Ah Qq.
17. **You** Ff | Alack, sir, you Qq. 25, 27, 37. [*Aside*] Johnson.

11-12. Were it not for the changes and calamitous reverses which the years bring, we should never be reconciled to grow old.

20. **Our means secure us**: our resources render us careless. Cf. 'secure,' *Henry V*, Chorus, IV, 17, and 'security,' *Macbeth*, III, v, 32. Many attempts have been made to emend the text of Quartos and Folios. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare 'maims' (Johnson's conjecture) was read for 'means.'

21. **commodities**: advantages. Cf. *2 Henry IV*, I, ii, 278.

22. **abused**: deceived. This sense survives in 'disabuse.'

EDGAR. [*Aside*] And worse I may be yet; the worst is not
So long as we can say 'This is the worst.'
OLD MAN. Fellow, where goest?
GLOUCESTER. Is it a beggar-man?
OLD MAN. Madman and beggar too.
GLOUCESTER. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I' th' last night's storm I such a fellow saw,
Which made me think a man a worm. My son
Came then into my mind; and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him; I have heard more since.
As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods;
They kill us for their sport.
EDGAR. [*Aside*] How should this be?
Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,
Ang'ring itself and others. Bless thee, master!
GLOUCESTER. Is that the naked fellow?
OLD MAN. Ay, my lord.
GLOUCESTER. Then, prithee, get thee gone. If for my sake
Thou wilt o'ertake us hence a mile or twain
I' th' way toward Dover, do it for ancient love;

41. **Then . . . gone** Qq | Get thee away Ff.

33. **a man a worm.** Cf. *Job*, xxv, 6: "man, that is a worm."

33–34. **My son . . . my mind.** This remembrance without recognition is a delectable touch of nature. Shakespeare has it in the case of the disguised Rosalind in the Forest of Arden and the disguised Imogen in *Cymbeline*.

37. **How . . . be?** "How is it that he no longer believes me to be a traitor?"— Craig. "Does not Edgar's exclamation, 'How should this be?' refer to his father's blindness?" — Furness.

38–39. The attempt to cheer the despondent by forced mirth, or a jester's jokes, often causes vexation to both him who suffers and him who seeks to alleviate the suffering.

And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Which I 'll entreat to lead me.

OLD MAN. Alack, sir, he is mad.

GLOUCESTER. 'T is the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind.

Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure;
Above the rest, be gone.

OLD MAN. I 'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,
Come on 't what will. [*Exit*]

GLOUCESTER. Sirrah, naked fellow, —

EDGAR. Poor Tom 's a-cold. [*Aside*] I cannot daub it further.

GLOUCESTER. Come hither, fellow.

EDGAR. [*Aside*] And yet I must. — Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

GLOUCESTER. Know'st thou the way to Dover?

EDGAR. Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-path. Poor Tom hath been scar'd out of his good wits. Bless thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend! Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as Obidicut; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of stealing; Modo, of murder;

45. **Which** Ff | Who Qq.
49. **'parel** | parrell QqF1.
52, 54. [*Aside*] Johnson.
52. **daub** Ff | dance Qq.
57. **scar'd** F3F4 | scarr'd F1F2 | scard Qq | scarred Schmidt.
58-62. **Five . . . master** | Ff omit | Qq print as verse.

46. **times' plague.** "When enthusiasts madden the ignorant. The elements were already working in England which produced the Fifth Monarchy and the Blackfriars' fanatics, Naylor, General Harrison, and the like." — Moberly.

49. **'parel.** For words with dropped prefixes, see Abbott, § 460.

52. **daub it**: keep up the disguise. Cf. *Richard III*, III, v, 29: "So smooth he daub'd his vice with show of virtue."

59–61. See quotations from Harsnet, III, iv, 105, 128, 131.

Stiberdigebit, of mopping and mowing, who since possesses chambermaids and waitingwomen. So, bless thee, master!

GLOUCESTER. Here, take this purse, thou whom the heaven's plagues
Have humbl'd to all strokes; that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier. Heavens, deal so still!
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
Because he does not feel, feel your power quickly;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover?

EDGAR. Ay, master.

GLOUCESTER. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep.
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I 'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me; from that place
I shall no leading need.

EDGAR. Give me thy arm;
Poor Tom shall lead thee. [*Exeunt*]

61. **Stiberdigebit** Qq | Flibbertigibbet Pope. — **mopping and mowing** Theobald | Mobing, And Mohing Q2.
67. **slaves** Ff | stands Qq.
68. **does** Q1 | do's Ff | doth Q2.
73. **fearfully** Ff | firmely Qq.

61. 'Stiberdigebit' is the Quarto form of the Folio 'Flibbertigibbet.' See textual variants, III, iv, 105. — **mopping and mowing**: making faces and grimaces. Cf. *The Tempest*, IV, i, 47. The expression is in Harsnet: "grinne, mop and mow like an ape."

62. **chambermaids**. Harsnet tells of three chambermaids in the family of a Mr. Edmund Peckham being 'possessed.'

66. **superfluous**: with more than enough. Cf. II, iv, 259.

67. **slaves your ordinance**: overrules the right order of things to his desire. 'Your' is impersonal.

72. Identified with what is now called 'Shakespeare's Cliff.'

SCENE II. *Before the Duke of* ALBANY'S *palace*

Enter GONERIL *and* EDMUND

GONERIL. Welcome, my lord. I marvel our mild husband
Not met us on the way.

Enter OSWALD

Now, where 's your master?

OSWALD. Madam, within; but never man so chang'd.
I told him of the army that was landed;
He smil'd at it. I told him you were coming;
His answer was, 'The worse.' Of Gloucester's treachery,
And of the loyal service of his son,
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot,
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out.
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him;
What like, offensive.

GONERIL. [*To* EDMUND] Then shall you go no further.
It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake. He 'll not feel wrongs

Before . . . palace Globe | QqFf Gonerill, Bastard, and Steward Ff. omit. — *Enter* . . . Theobald | Enter 12. [*To* EDMUND] Hanmer.

1. This is in proper sequel to the opening of the last scene of the third act, where Cornwall sends Edmund to escort Goneril home. She is now welcoming her escort to her palace, and inviting him to enter.

8. **sot**: fool (Fr. *sot*). Cf. *The Tempest*, III, ii, 101.

12–14. The meaning is, that Albany, in his cowardice, ignores such wrongs and insults as a man of spirit would energetically resent, thus skulking from danger under a feigned insensibility. — **cowish**: cowardly. Clar conjectures 'currish.'

Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother;
Hasten his musters and conduct his powers.
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us; ere long you are like to hear,
If you dare venture in your own behalf,
A mistress's command. Wear this; spare speech.
[*Giving a favour*]
Decline your head; this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air.
Conceive, and fare thee well.

EDMUND. Yours in the ranks of death.

GONERIL. My most dear Gloucester!
[*Exit* EDMUND]
O, the difference of man and man!
To thee a woman's services are due;
My fool usurps my body.

OSWALD. Madam, here comes my lord. [*Exit*]

17. **arms** | armes Qq | names Ff.
21. [*Giving a favour*] Johnson.
25. [*Exit* EDMUND | Exit F_1F_2 (after **death**) | QqF_3F_4 omit.
26. Qq omit.
28. **My fool . . . body** Ff | My foote . . . body Q_1 (some copies) | A foole . . . bed Q_1 (some copies) | My foote . . . head Q_2. — [*Exit*] Exit Steward Qq | Ff omit.

14–15. **Our wishes . . . effects.** Those wishes of course were, that she were a widow, or at least free of marriage bonds. The words suggest that she meditates killing her husband.

21–23. "To complete the horror they produce in us, these monsters are amorous. Their love is even more hideous than their hate." — Dowden.

24 **Conceive**: understand my feelings towards you.

28. **My fool usurps my body.** In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare was adopted Malone's reading, 'My fool usurps my bed.'

Enter ALBANY

GONERIL. I have been worth the whistle.

ALBANY. O Goneril!
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition.
That nature which contemns its origin
Cannot be border'd certain in itself;
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither,
And come to deadly use.

GONERIL. No more; the text is foolish.

ALBANY. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile;
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear would lick,

31–50. I . . . deep | Ff omit.
34. sliver | shiver Pope.
38, 47. vile | vild Q1 | vilde Q2.
42. even Q1 | Q2 omits.

29. "A poore dogge that is not worth the whystlyng." — Heywood's *Proverbs*. Goneril thinks that her husband, knowing of her coming, should have given her a more distinguished welcome home. Her words imply, There was a time when I was considered worthy of some attention.

32–33. A person who has reached such a pitch of unnaturalness as to scorn his parents, and trample on their infirmities, cannot be restrained within any certain bounds; there is nothing too bad for him to do. If Goneril will kill her father, whom will she not kill?

34. **sliver**: strip off. Cf. *Macbeth*, IV, i, 28.

35. **material sap**: sap that supplies the matter of life.

36. Warburton found here an allusion to the use that witches and enchanters are said to make of withered branches in their charms.

39. **savour but**: have a relish only for.

42. **head-lugg'd**: drawn by the head. Cf. *1 Henry IV*, I, ii, 83.

Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.
Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
A man, a prince, by him so benefited!
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
It will come,
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.

GONERIL. Milk-liver'd man!
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st
Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief. Where 's thy drum?
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land,
With plumed helm thy state begins to threat;
Whilst thou, a moral fool, sitt'st still, and criest
'Alack, why does he so?'

ALBANY. See thyself, devil!

47. **these** Jennens | this Q1 (some copies) | the Q1 (some copies) Q2. 53–59. **that not . . . he so** | Ff omit. 57. **thy . . . threat** Jennens | thy . . . thereat Q1 (some copies) | thy slaier begins threats Q2.

43. **madded**: maddened. Cf. *Cymbeline*, IV, ii, 313.

46–50. If the gods do not avenge these crimes, the crimes will avenge themselves by turning men into devourers of one another, or by inspiring humanity with a rage of self-destruction. A profound truth often exemplified in human history.

50. **Milk-liver'd**: pusillanimous. Cf. 'lily-liver'd,' II, ii, 15.

54–55. **Fools . . . mischief.** The reference is probably to her father. Furness thinks it is to Albany. She has not yet heard of the punishment meted out to Gloucester.

56. **noiseless**: free from the sound of preparation for war.

58. **moral**: moralizing. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, V, i, 30.

Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
So horrid as in woman.

GONERIL. O vain fool!

ALBANY. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
Be-monster not thy feature! Were 't my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They 're apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones. Howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

GONERIL. Marry, your manhood — mew!

Enter a MESSENGER

ALBANY. What news?

MESSENGER. O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's dead;
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloucester.

ALBANY. Gloucester's eyes!

MESSENGER. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword

60. **seems** | shewes Q1.
62-68. **Thou . . . mew** | Ff omit.
62. **self-cover'd** | selfe-couerd Qq | self-converted Theobald.
68. — **mew!** | mew — Q1 (some copies) | now — Q1 (some copies) Q2.

60–61. The deformity, or depravity, of the fiend is proper to him, is his own, and in keeping with the rest of his being, so that the inside and outside agree together, and therefore is less horrid than when it is covered by a woman's shape.

62–63. Thou transformed creature, whose natural self (fiendish heart) is covered by a woman's shape, do not make thyself look like the monster that thou art.

66. **Howe'er**: although. Cf. *Cymbeline*, IV, ii, 46.

68. **mew!** A note of contempt after the 'manhood' sarcasm.

73. **remorse**: pity, compassion. Cf. *The Tempest*, V, i, 76.

To his great master; who, thereat enrag'd,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead;
But not without that harmful stroke which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

ALBANY. This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge! But, O poor Gloucester!
Lost he his other eye?

MESSENGER. Both, both, my lord.
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;
'T is from your sister.

GONERIL. [*Aside*] One way I like this well;
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life; another way
The news is not so tart. I 'll read, and answer. [*Exit*]

ALBANY. Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

MESSENGER. Come with my lady hither.

ALBANY. He is not here.

75. **thereat enrag'd** | threat-enrag'd F1.
79. **justicers** Steevens | Iustisers Q1 | Justices Ff.
83. [*Aside*] Johnson.
87. [*Exit*] Qq | Ff omit.

76. This may seem inconsistent with the matter as represented in a former scene, but it is not really so; for, though Regan thrust the servant with a sword, a wound before received from Cornwall may have caused his death.

83–86. Goneril likes this well, inasmuch as she has now but to make away with her sister and her husband by poison, and then the whole kingdom will be hers to share with Edmund, whom she intends to marry: but, on the other hand, Regan, being now a widow, and having Edmund with her, may win him by holding out a more practicable match; and so the castle which Goneril has built in imagination may rush down upon her own head.

MESSENGER. No, my good lord; I met him back again.
ALBANY. Knows he the wickedness?
MESSENGER. Ay, my good lord; 't was he inform'd against him;
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might have the freer course.
ALBANY. Gloucester, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend;
Tell me what more thou know'st. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III. *The French camp near Dover*

Enter KENT *and a* GENTLEMAN

KENT. Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back know you the reason?

GENTLEMAN. Something he left imperfect in the state, which since his coming forth is thought of; which imports to th' kingdom so much fear and danger that his personal return was most requir'd and necessary.

KENT. Who hath he left behind him general?

GENTLEMAN. The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.

KENT. Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief?

SCENE III Pope | Ff Rowe omit the whole scene. — *The French* . . . *Dover* Steevens | Qq omit.
2. **the reason** Q_2 | no reason Q_1.

SCENE III. "This scene seems to have been left out of the Folio only to shorten the play." — Johnson. It stands in dramatic contrast to the previous scene. — *a* GENTLEMAN: "the same whom Kent had sent with letters to Cordelia" (III, i). — Johnson.

GENTLEMAN. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence;
And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek. It seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion, who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.
KENT. O, then it mov'd her.
GENTLEMAN. Not to a rage; patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears
Were like a better way; those happy smilets
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,
If all could so become it.
KENT. Made she no verbal question?
GENTLEMAN. Faith, once or twice she heav'd the name of father
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;

11. **Ay, sir** Johnson | I say Qq. Theobald (Warburton).
19. **a better way** Qq | wetter May 20. **seem'd** Pope | seeme Qq.

19. **Were like a better way.** This passage has caused endless comment. The usual interpretation is, Were like sunshine and rain but in a more beautiful way. Often a comma is inserted after 'like.' In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare the punctuation adopted was, "Were like: a better way, —" with the interpretation, Her smiles and tears were like sunshine and rain at once; the sense being completed at 'like.' The speaker then proceeds to say the same thing again, in what he regards as 'a better way.' — 'Smilets' is a Shakespearian diminutive.

24. **Made she . . . question**: did she not say anything?

Cried, 'Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters!
Kent! father! sisters! What i' th' storm? i' th' night?
Let pity not believe it!' There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes;
And, clamour-moisten'd, then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

KENT. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and make could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

GENTLEMAN. No.

KENT. Was this before the king return'd?

GENTLEMAN. No, since.

KENT. Well, sir, the poor distressed Lear 's i' th' town;
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

GENTLEMAN. Why, good sir?

KENT. A sovereign shame so elbows him; his own unkindness,

31. **And, clamour-moisten'd,** | And clamour moisten'd; Capell| And clamour moistened her, Qq.
34. **and make** Q1 | and mate Q2.

31. **clamour-moisten'd.** Another much disputed expression. The meaning may be, 'having wept aloud,' or, 'after her crying was drenched with tears.'

32–33. Cf. the 'spherical predominance' passage, I, ii, 109–114.

34. **self**: same. See note, I, i, 62. — **mate and make**: husband and wife. 'Make' ('maik') in the sense of 'partner' is still in dialect use in England and Scotland.

42. **elbows him.** Among the interpretations offered are: "stands at his elbow and reminds him of the past." — Clar; "seems to buffet him." — Moberly; "pushes him aside." — Schmidt.

That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters, — these things sting
His mind so venomously that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

GENTLEMAN. Alack, poor gentleman!

KENT. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?

GENTLEMAN. 'T is so, they are afoot.

KENT. Well, sir, I 'll bring you to our master Lear,
And leave you to attend him. Some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE IV. *The same. A tent*

Enter, with drum and colours, CORDELIA, DOCTOR, *and* Soldiers

CORDELIA. Alack, 't is he: why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds,
With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow

55. [*Exeunt*] Pope | Exit Ff.
SCENE IV Pope | Scena Tertia Ff. — *The same. A tent* Capell. — *Enter* . . . DOCTOR . . . | Enter . . . Gentlemen . . . Ff.

3. **fumiter** | fumiterr Theobald | femiter Qq | Fenitar Ff.

4. **burdocks** Hanmer | hor-docks Qq | Hardokes F_1F_2 | harlocks Steevens | hoar-docks Collier.

51. **dear**: important. Expressing extremeness or intensity.

5. **idle weeds**. The same expression occurs in *Richard III*, III, i, 103. Cf. "idle pebble," IV, vi, 21.

In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an* Officer] What can man's wisdom
In the restoring his bereaved sense?
He that helps him take all my outward worth.

DOCTOR. There is means, madam.
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

CORDELIA. All bless'd secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him,
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER. News, madam;
The British powers are marching hitherward.

8. [*Exit an* Officer] Malone.
11. DOCTOR | Doct. Qq | Gent. Ff.
18. **distress** | distresse Qq | desires $F_1F_2F_3$ | desire F_4.

6. **sustaining**: nourishing. In antithesis to 'idle,' line 5.— **century**: troop (properly, of a hundred men). The Folio spelling is 'centery,' and some interpret as 'sentry.'

11–15. Upon this remarkable passage Dr. A. O. Kellogg comments as follows: "This reply is significant, and worthy of careful attention, as embracing a brief summary of almost the only true principles recognized by modern science."

14. **simples**: medicinal herbs. Sometimes used in the sense of 'element ingredients' and 'medicines' generally.

17. **aidant and remediate**: aiding and remedial.

CORDELIA. 'T is known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning and important tears hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our ag'd father's right;
Soon may I hear and see him! [*Exeunt*]

SCENE V. GLOUCESTER'S *castle*

Enter REGAN *and* OSWALD

REGAN. But are my brother's powers set forth?
OSWALD. Ay, madam.
REGAN. Himself in person there?
OSWALD. Madam, with much ado.
Your sister is the better soldier.
REGAN. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?
OSWALD. No, madam.
REGAN. What might import my sister's letter to him?
OSWALD. I know not, lady.
REGAN. Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.
It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,
To let him live; where he arrives he moves
All hearts against us. Edmund, I think, is gone,

26. **important** Qq | importun'd Ff.
28. **right** QqF_3F_4 | rite F_1F_2.
SCENE V Pope | Scena Quarta Ff. — GLOUCESTER'S *castle* Globe | Qq Ff omit.—*Enter* . . . OSWALD | Enter . . . Steward QqFf.
2. **there** Ff | Qq omit.
4. **lord** Ff | lady Qq.

26. **important**: importunate. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, II, i, 73.
27. **blown**: inflated, puffed up. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, II, v, 48.

In pity of his misery, to dispatch
His nighted life; moreover, to descry
The strength o' th' enemy.

OSWALD. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

REGAN. Our troops set forth to-morrow; stay with us.
The ways are dangerous.

OSWALD. I may not, madam;
My lady charg'd my duty in this business.

REGAN. Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you
Transport her purposes by word? Belike,
Some things — I know not what. I 'll love thee much;
Let me unseal the letter.

OSWALD. Madam, I had rather —

REGAN. I know your lady does not love her husband,
I am sure of that; and at her late being here
She gave strange œillades and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

OSWALD. I, madam?

REGAN. I speak in understanding; y' are; I know 't.
Therefore I do advise you, take this note:
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd,
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's: you may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you, give him this;
And, when your mistress hears thus much from you,

21. **Some things** Ff Furness | Something Qq Globe Camb.
25. **œillades** Capell | aliads Qq | Eliads F_1 | Iliads $F_2F_3F_4$ | eyliads Delius | œilliads Dyce.
28. **y' are**; I Ff | for I Qq | you are; I Rowe.
32. **lady's** Rowe | ladies QqFf.

25. "Œillade: An amorous looke, affectionate winke."— Cotgrave.
26. **of her bosom**: in her confidence, her bosom confidant.
29. **take this note**: take particular note of this.

I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her. 35
So, fare you well.
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

OSWALD. Would I could meet him, madam! I should show
What party I do follow.

REGAN. Fare thee well. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE VI. *Fields near Dover*

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* EDGAR *dressed like a peasant*

GLOUCESTER. When shall I come to th' top of that same hill?

EDGAR. You do climb up it now; look, how we labour.

GLOUCESTER. Methinks the ground is even.

EDGAR. Horrible steep.
Hark, do you hear the sea?

GLOUCESTER. No, truly.

EDGAR. Why, then your other senses grow imperfect 5
By your eyes' anguish.

GLOUCESTER. So may it be, indeed;
Methinks thy voice is alter'd, and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

EDGAR. You 're much deceiv'd; in nothing am I chang'd
But in my garments.

GLOUCESTER. Methinks you 're better spoken. 10

SCENE VI Pope | Scena Quinta Ff. — *Enter* . . . EDGAR *dressed like a peasant* | Enter . . . Edgar Ff. 1. I Ff | we Qq.

35. Regan's cold, penetrating virulence is well shown in this. The plain English of it is, Tell her to do her worst, and help herself if she can.

EDGAR. Come on, sir; here 's the place. Stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 't is to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles. Half way down
Hangs one that gathers sampire, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge,
That on th' unnumber'd idle pebble chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I 'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

15. **sampire** Qq Ff | samphire Rowe. chaffes Q_1 | peebles chafe Q_2 | pebbles
17. **walk** | walke Qq | walk'd Ff. chafes Pope Globe Camb.
21. **pebble chafes** Ff Rowe | peeble 22. **so** Ff | its so Q_1.

15. **sampire**: samphire, sea fennel. 'Sampire' is "the more correct form, representing a former pronunciation." — Skeat. Gerarde, in his *Herbal*, gives one of its Italian names as *herba di San Pietro*. Here the origin of the English word may be seen. The gathering of this plant (used for pickles) on the cliffs near Dover seems to have been a regular trade in Shakespeare's day. Cf. Drayton, *Polyolbion*:

> Rob Dovers neighboring cleeues of sampyre, to excite
> His dull and sickly taste, and stirre up appetite.

19. **cock**: "small ship's boat. Now always cock-boat." — Murray.

21. **pebble**. Used collectively. Murray quotes Lyly, *Gallathea*, I, i, 13, "heape of small pyble"; Greene, *Pandosto*, "precious Diamonds are cut . . . when despised peable lye safe in the sand." "Whether we follow the Quartos or Folios, we are nearer to Shakespeare than when we follow Pope with his harsh sibilants in a line of exquisite beauty." — Furness.

GLOUCESTER. Set me where you stand.

EDGAR. Give me your hand. You are now within a foot
Of th' extreme verge. For all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.

GLOUCESTER. Let go my hand.
Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods
Prosper it with thee! Go thou further off;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

EDGAR. Now fare you well, good sir.

GLOUCESTER. With all my heart.

EDGAR. Why I do trifle thus with his despair
Is done to cure it.

GLOUCESTER. [*Kneeling*] O you mighty gods!
This world I do renounce, and, in your sights,
Shake patiently my great affliction off.
If I could bear it longer, and not fall
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
My snuff and loathed part of nature should
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!
Now, fellow, fare thee well.

[GLOUCESTER *throws himself forward*]

EDGAR. Gone, sir; farewell.

30. **further** Ff | farther Qq.
34. [*Kneeling*] He kneeles Qq | **Ff** omit.
40. **him** Ff | Qq omit.
41. GLOUCESTER . . . *forward* | He fals Qq | **Ff** omit.

27. **upright.** "This expression was purposely intended to heighten the horror of the description, and to affect the reader's imagination the more strongly. The spot is therefore represented as so extremely near the edge of the precipice, that there was the utmost hazard in leaping even upright upon it." — Heath.

39. **snuff**: refuse. A name for burned down candle-wick.

[*Aside*] And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life, when life itself
Yields to the theft. Had he been where he thought,
By this had thought been past. Alive or dead?
Ho you, sir! friend! Hear you, sir? speak!
Thus might he pass indeed; yet he revives.
What are you, sir?

GLOUCESTER. Away, and let me die.

EDGAR. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers, air,
So many fathom down precipitating,
Thou 'dst shiver'd like an egg; but thou dost breathe,
Hast heavy substance, bleed'st not, speak'st, art sound.
Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell;
Thy life 's a miracle. Speak yet again.

GLOUCESTER. But have I fall'n, or no?

EDGAR. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.
Look up a-height; the shrill-gorg'd lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard. Do but look up.

44, 45. been F_4 | bin $F_1F_2F_3$. **57. summit** Rowe | Somnet F_1 | sommons Q_1 | summons Q_2. — **bourn** | Bourne F_1F_2 | borne Qq.
49. aught Theobald | ought QqFf.
53. at each QqFf | at least Rowe.

42–45. conceit: imagination. The general meaning of the passage is, When one is thus longing to die, I do not know but that the mere imagination of such a leap, or such a fall, might be the death of him. This accords with Edgar's words in line 47.

49. gossamer. Literally, 'goose-summer.' Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, II, vi, 18: "the gossamer That idles in the wanton summer air."

53. at each: attached end to end. A bold Shakespearian phrase.

54. fell: fallen. For similar irregularities, see Abbott, § 344.

57. bourn: boundary. The 'boundary' of England towards France. See note on 'bourn' meaning 'stream,' III, vi, 25.

58. shrill-gorg'd: shrill-throated, shrill-voiced.

GLOUCESTER. Alack, I have no eyes.
Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit
To end itself by death? 'T was yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.
EDGAR. Give me your arm.
Up; so. How is 't? Feel you your legs? You stand.
GLOUCESTER. Too well, too well.
EDGAR. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o' th' cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?
GLOUCESTER. A poor unfortunate beggar.
EDGAR. As I stood here below, methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd and wav'd like the enridged sea.
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours
Of men's impossibilities, have preserv'd thee.
GLOUCESTER. I do remember now. Henceforth I 'll bear
Affliction till it do cry out itself
'Enough, enough,' and die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man; often 't would say

71. **whelk'd** Hanmer | wealk'd F1F2 | welk't Q1. — **enridged** Qq | enraged Ff. 73. **make them** Ff | made their Qq.

71. **whelk'd**: covered with whelk-like knobs and protuberances. Cf. *Henry V*, III, vi, 108.

73. **clearest**. Either (1) 'purest'; or (2) 'most glorious.'

74. **men's impossibilities**: things that seem to men impossible. — The incident of Gloucester being made to believe himself ascending, and leaping from, the chalky cliff is a notable case of inherent improbability overcome in effect by opulence and vividness of description.

'The fiend, the fiend!' he led me to that place.

EDGAR. Bear free and patient thoughts. But who comes here?

Enter LEAR, *fantastically dressed with wild flowers*

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

LEAR. No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am the king himself.

EDGAR. O thou side-piercing sight!

LEAR. Nature 's above art in that respect. There 's your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crowkeeper. Draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do 't. There 's my gauntlet! I 'll prove it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills.

81. Scene VII Pope.—*Enter* LEAR (after **thoughts**). . . . *flowers* Capell | Enter Lear Ff 83. **coining** | coyning Qq | crying Ff.

81–82. Edgar is speaking of Lear's dress (cf. 'unaccommodated,' III, iv, 98), and concludes that he is not in his 'safer sense,' i.e. in his 'senses.' — **His**: its. 'His' is the old regular possessive neuter.

83. He is fumbling with money. No one but the king had authority to coin money.

86. Nothing can take away the natural rights of a king.

87–88. The money in his hand, and a glimpse of the troops near Dover, make him think he is impressing recruits and testing them at archery. — **crowkeeper**. Either (1) a 'scarecrow'; or (2) a 'crow-head.' Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 6. — **Draw . . . yard**. Cf. *The Hunting of the Cheviot*, stanza 45:

> He had [a] good bow in his hand,
> made of a trusty tree;
> An arrow of a cloth-yard long
> to the hard head haled hee.

89–92. From archery the old king rambles to mouse-hunting, a challenge, a battlefield, falconry, and then back to archery again;

O, well flown, bird! I' th' clout, i' th' clout! hewgh! Give the word.

EDGAR. Sweet marjoram.

LEAR. Pass.

GLOUCESTER. I know that voice.

LEAR. Ha! Goneril, with a white beard! They flatter'd me like a dog; and told me I had white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay' and 'no' to every thing that I said! 'Ay' and 'no' too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not peace at my bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 't is a lie, I am not ague-proof.

GLOUCESTER. The trick of that voice I do well remember. Is 't not the king?

LEAR. Ay, every inch a king.
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes!
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause?
Adultery?

91. **clout** Ff | ayre Qq.
97. **white** Qq | the white Ff.
104. **ague-proof** F_4 | agu-proofe F_1F_2 | argue-proofe Qq.

when he says, "Give the word," he is a sentinel on guard. — **brown bills**: pikes or halberds browned to keep off the rust. — **clout**: the white centre of the target. Cf. *2 Henry IV*, III, ii, 51.

98–99. To tie our assent and dissent entirely to another, to speak nothing but in echo of his 'yes' and 'no,' is the extreme of sycophancy, and may well be called "no good divinity." In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare the punctuation and arrangement were, "To say 'ay' and 'no' to every thing that I said 'ay' and 'no' to, was no good divinity."

105. **trick**: distinguishing mark. The expression seems to be from heraldry. Cf. *King John*, I, i, 85.

Thou shalt not die. Die for adultery! No;
For Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters. —
Give me an ounce of civet; good apothecary, sweeten my imagination; there 's money for thee.

GLOUCESTER. O, let me kiss that hand!

LEAR. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

GLOUCESTER. O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world
Shall so wear out to nought. Dost thou know me?

LEAR. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid; I 'll not love. Read thou this challenge; mark but the penning of it.

GLOUCESTER. Were all thy letters suns, I could not see.

EDGAR. [*Aside*] I would not take this from report; it is,
And my heart breaks at it.

LEAR. Read.

GLOUCESTER. What, with the case of eyes?

LEAR. O ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light; yet you see how this world goes.

GLOUCESTER. I see it feelingly.

LEAR. What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears; see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear; change

113. **sweeten** Ff | to sweeten Qq. 118. **Shall** Ff | Should Q_1. — **nought** | naught QqFf. 120. **squiny** QqFf | squint Q_3 Pope. 121. **of it** Ff | on 't Q_2 | oft Q_1. 122. **thy** Ff | the Qq. — **see** F_1F_2 | see one QqF_3F_4. 123. [*Aside*] Hanmer.

113. civet: musky perfume from the civet-cat.
120. squiny: squint. This word is still heard in dialect.
127. are you there with me: is that what you mean?

places; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar? 136

GLOUCESTER. Ay, sir.

LEAR. And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority; a dog 's obey'd in office. — 140

The usurer hangs the cozener.
Through tatter'd clothes great vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it. 145
None does offend, none, I say, none; I 'll able 'em:
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal th' accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now, now! 150
Pull off my boots; harder, harder; so.

EDGAR. [*Aside*] O, matter and impertinency mix'd!
Reason in madness!

LEAR. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.
I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester. 155

142. **Through** Qq | Thorough Ff. — **great** Ff | small Qq.
143-148. **Plate . . . lips** | Qq omit.
143. **Plate sin** Theobald | Place sinnes F_1F_2.
152. [*Aside*] Capell.

135. **handy-dandy**. "This is a play among children, in which something is shaken between the hands and then a guess is made in which hand it is retained." — Malone.

141. **cozener**: cheat, swindler. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 256.

142. **great vices**. "I cannot but think that the Folios are right here, and that the meaning is, 'When looked at through tattered clothes, all vices are great.'" — Furness.

146. **able 'em**: warrant them, vouch for them.

152. **impertinency**: "rambling thought, folly." — Schmidt.

Thou must be patient; we came crying hither.
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,
We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee; mark.

GLOUCESTER. Alack, alack the day!

LEAR. When we are born, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of fools. — This a good block;
It were a delicate stratagem to shoe
A troop of horse with felt. I 'll put 't in proof;
And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

Enter a GENTLEMAN, *with* Attendants

GENTLEMAN. O, here he is; lay hand upon him. Sir,
Your most dear daughter —

LEAR. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of fortune. Use me well;
You shall have ransom. Let me have surgeons;
I 'm cut to th' brains.

164. **sons-in-law** | sonnes in law Q_2 | sonne in lawes Q_1 | Son in Lawes F_1 | Sonnes in Lawes F_2.
166. Scene VIII Pope.—*Enter* ... Attendants Rowe | Enter a GENTLEMAN Ff.
170. **surgeons** Ff | a churgion Q_1 | a Chirurgeon Q_2 | a surgeon Capell.

156–158. Cf. the following passage from Holland's *Pliny:* "Man alone, poor wretch, nature hath laid all naked upon the bare earth, even on his birthday to cry and wrawle presently from the very first houre that he is borne into this world."

161–163. When Lear begins to moralize, he takes off his hat and holds it in his hand as preachers used to do. "This ('this is') a good block" probably refers to the shape of the hat. As he manipulates it, the thought of what the hat is made of occurs to him, and he starts off on the vagary of shoeing horses with felt. Cf. Fenton, *Tragicall Discourses*, 1567: "He attyreth himself for the purpose in a night gowne girt to hym, with a payre of shoes of felt, leaste the noyse of his feete should discover his goinge."

GENTLEMAN. You shall have any thing.

LEAR. No seconds? all myself?
Why, this would make a man a man of salt
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

GENTLEMAN. Good sir, —

LEAR. I will die bravely, like a smug bridegroom. What!
I will be jovial. Come, come, I am a king,
My masters; know you that?

GENTLEMAN. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

LEAR. Then there 's life in 't. Come, and you get it, you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

[*Exit running;* Attendants *follow*]

GENTLEMAN. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

EDGAR. Hail, gentle sir.

GENTLEMAN. Sir, speed you; what 's your will?

EDGAR. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward?

175. **Ay . . . sir** | Ff omit. — GENTLEMAN. **Good sir** Q2 | Q1 omits.
176. **smug** | Qq omit.
178. **My** | Ff omit. — **that? Ff** | that. Q1 Globe Camb | that! Staunton.
180. **Come, and** Ff | nay an Q1 | nay if Q2.
181. **by Ff** | with Qq. — [*Exit . . .* | Exit Ff.
183. **one** Qq | a Ff.

173. **salt**: tears. Cf. *Coriolanus*, V, vi, 101; *The Tempest*, I, ii, 155.

176. **smug**: spruce. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III, i, 49: "A beggar that was us'd to come so smug upon the market."

180. **there 's life in 't**: the case is not desperate.

181. **Sa . . . sa.** This expression "is not uncommon in the dramatic literature of the time, and is always expressive of sudden effort or sudden attack." — Craig. Perhaps here it is meant to express Lear's panting as he runs.

GENTLEMAN. Most sure and vulgar; every one hears that,
Which can distinguish sound.
EDGAR. But, by your favour,
How near 's the other army?
GENTLEMAN. Near and on speedy foot; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.
EDGAR. I thank you, sir; that 's all.
GENTLEMAN. Though that the queen on special cause is here,
Her army is mov'd on.
EDGAR. I thank you, sir. [*Exit* GENTLEMAN]
GLOUCESTER. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me;
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again
To die before you please!
EDGAR. Well pray you, father.
GLOUCESTER. Now, good sir, what are you?
EDGAR. A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows;
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I 'll lead you to some biding.
GLOUCESTER. Hearty thanks;

194. [*Exit* . . . | Exit Ff (after on). 199. tame to Ff | lame by Qq.

188. **vulgar**: widely known. Cf. *The Comedy of Errors*, III, i, 100: "A vulgar comment will be made of it."

191–192. **speedy foot**: footing it fast, marching rapidly. — **the main . . . thought**: the main body is expected to be descried every hour.

197–198. It was customary for young people to address an aged person as father or mother. Hence Edgar keeps addressing Gloucester so without being recognized as his son.

201. **pregnant**: disposed. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, iv, 90: "virtues all, To which the Grecians are most prompt and pregnant."

The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter OSWALD

OSWALD. A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh
To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember; the sword is out
That must destroy thee.

GLOUCESTER. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to 't. [EDGAR *interposes*]

OSWALD. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence!
Lest that th' infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

EDGAR. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

OSWALD. Let go, slave, or thou diest!

EDGAR. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk pass. And chud ha' been zwagger'd out of my life, 't would not ha' been zo long as 't is by a vortnight. Nay, come not near th' old man; keep out, che vor ye, or ise try whether your costard or my ballow be the harder; chill be plain with you.

204. Scene IX Pope. — *Enter* OSWALD | Enter Steward QqFf.
206. **old** Ff | most Qq.
216. **And** QqFf | An Capell.

204. **To boot, and boot.** "By the repetition Gloucester wishes to convey both meanings of 'to boot,' '*in addition* (to my thanks)' and '(the bounty of heaven) *be your help*.'" — Herford.

207. **Briefly . . . remember**: quickly recall your sins and repent.

213. Somersetshire dialect. — **Chill**: I will. Contracted from *ich will*.

216. **And chud**: if I could. 'Chud' from *ich could*.

218. **che vor ye**: I warn you. — **ise**: I shall.

219. **costard**: head. Originally, a kind of apple. — **ballow**: cudgel.

OSWALD. Out, dunghill!

EDGAR. Chill pick your teeth, zir. Come, no matter vor your foins. [*They fight, and* EDGAR *knocks him down*]

OSWALD. Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain, take my purse:
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;
And give the letters which thou find'st about me
To Edmund Earl of Gloucester; seek him out
Upon the English party. O, untimely death! [*Dies*]

EDGAR. I know thee well; a serviceable villain,
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

GLOUCESTER. What, is he dead?

EDGAR. Sit you down, father; rest you.
Let 's see these pockets; the letters that he speaks of
May be my friends. He 's dead; I am only sorry
He had no other deathsman. Let us see.
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not.
To know our enemies' minds, we 'd rip their hearts;
Their papers, is more lawful.

[*Reads*] Let our reciprocal vows be remember'd. You have many opportunities to cut him off; if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offer'd. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror: then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol; from the loath'd warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.

Your — wife, so I would say — affectionate servant,
GONERIL.

223. [*They . . . down*] Ff omit. 228. **English** Ff | British Qq. — [*Dies*] Ff omit. 233. **these** Ff | his Qq.—**the** Ff | These Qq. 237. **we 'd** | **wee'd** Qq | **we** Ff.

223. **foins**: thrusts. Cf. *2 Henry IV*, II, i, 17.

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
And the exchange my brother! Here, in the sands,
Thee I 'll rake up, the post unsanctified
Of murderous lechers; and, in the mature time,
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practis'd duke. For him 't is well
That of thy death and business I can tell.

GLOUCESTER. The king is mad. How stiff is my vile sense,
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract;
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
And woes by wrong imaginations lose
The knowledge of themselves. [*Drum afar off*]

EDGAR. Give me your hand; 260
Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.
Come, father, I 'll bestow you with a friend. [*Exeunt*]

247. **undistinguish'd** | vndistinguisht Q_2 | Indistinguisht Q_1 | indinguish'd F_1. — **will** Ff | wit Qq.
255. **vile** F_4 | vild Q_1 | vilde Q_2F_1.

247. The general meaning is, Woman's will has no distinguishable bounds, or no assignable limits; there is no telling what she will do, or where she will stop.

250. **rake up**: cover up. The expression is still common in dialect, applied specially to covering up half-burned ashes.

251. **mature**. Accented apparently like 'nature.' See Abbott, § 492.

252. **ungracious**: wicked. Cf. *2 Henry VI*, IV, x, 88: "And there cut off thy most ungracious head."

253. **death-practis'd**: whose death was plotted.

256. "'Ingenious feeling' signifies a feeling from an understanding not disturbed or disordered, but which, representing things as they are, makes the sense of pain the more exquisite."—Warburton.

259–260. As the woes or sufferings of madmen are lost in imaginary felicities.

SCENE VII. *A tent in the French camp*

Enter CORDELIA, KENT, *and* DOCTOR

CORDELIA. O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.

KENT. To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'erpaid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

CORDELIA. Be better suited;
These weeds are memories of those worser hours;
I prithee, put them off.

KENT. Pardon, dear madam;
Yet to be known shortens my made intent.
My boon I make it, that you know me not
Till time and I think meet.

CORDELIA. Then be 't so, my good lord. [*To the* DOCTOR]
How does the king?

SCENE VII | Scene X Pope. — *A tent . . . camp* Steevens | QqFf omit. — *Enter . . . and* DOCTOR | Enter . . . and GENTLEMAN Ff. 8. **Pardon** Ff | Pardon me Qq. 12. [*To the* DOCTOR] QqFf omit.

SCENE VII. See Introduction, The Staging of the Scene of Lear's Reunion with Cordelia.

6. **suited**: dressed. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, I, ii, 79.

7. **memories**: memorials. Again the abstract for the concrete. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III, ii, 139: "beg a hair of him for memory."

9. That is, makes or will make me come short of it. Kent's thought is, that the being now known will cause him to fall short, not of his whole purpose, but of what he regards as the more important part of it, namely, a full restoration of things to the state they were in at the opening of the play; and that he can work better to this end by keeping up his disguise awhile longer.

DOCTOR. Madam, sleeps still.

CORDELIA. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature! 15
Th' untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father!

DOCTOR. So please your majesty
That we may wake the king? he hath slept long.

CORDELIA. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' th' sway of your own will. Is he array'd? 20

Enter LEAR *in a chair carried by* Servants. GENTLEMAN *in attendance*

GENTLEMAN. Ay, madam; in the heaviness of sleep
We put fresh garments on him.

DOCTOR. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

CORDELIA. Very well.

DOCTOR. Please you, draw near. Louder the music there.

CORDELIA. O my dear father, restoration hang 26
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

KENT. Kind and dear princess!

13, 17 (and elsewhere). DOCTOR | Gent. Ff.
21. GENTLEMAN *in attendance* | QqFf omit.
23-24. Continued to GENTLEMAN in Ff. — **not** | F_1F_2 omit.
24-25. CORDELIA. **Very...there** | Ff omit.

17. **child-changed**: changed, made mad, by his children.
24. **temperance**: self-control, calmness (after his sleep).
25. It is noteworthy that Shakespeare seems to have considered soft or slow music as favorable to sleep. Thus Lear had been composed to rest; now the doctor desires louder music to awake him.
27. **Thy medicine**: the medicine that will cure thee.

CORDELIA. Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face
To be oppos'd against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch — poor perdu! —
With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'T is wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all. He wakes; speak to him.

DOCTOR. Madam, do you; 't is fittest.

CORDELIA. How does my royal lord? how fares your majesty?

31. **Had challeng'd** | Did challenge Ff.
32. **warring** Qq | iarring F1.
33-36. **To stand . . . helm** | Ff omit.
36-38. **Mine . . . father** | in Ff lines end **me, fire, Father.**

35. **perdu**: forlorn one. "This refers, not to the *enfans perdus* . . . but to the *sentinelle perdu* of the old French army, i.e. sentries which were placed in very perilous positions." — Craig.

37–38. Verplanck says that Jarvis, the artist, used often to quote this passage as accumulating in the shortest compass the greatest causes of dislike, to be overcome by good-natured pity. "It is not merely the personal enemy, for whom there might be human sympathy, that is admitted to the family fireside, but his dog, and that a dog that had inflicted his own share of personal injury, and that, too, upon a gentle being from whom it was not possible that he could have received any provocation."

40. **short**. Either (1) 'scanty'; or (2) 'cut short for litter.'

42. **concluded all**. Either (1) 'utterly collapsed'; or (2) 'ended at once.' Steevens quotes *Timon of Athens*, I, i, 139.

LEAR. You do me wrong to take me out o' th' grave.
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.
CORDELIA. Sir, do you know me?
LEAR. You are a spirit, I know; when did you die?
CORDELIA. Still, still, far wide!
DOCTOR. He 's scarce awake; let him alone a while.
LEAR. Where have I been? where am I? Fair daylight?
I am mightily abus'd. I should e'en die with pity,
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands: let 's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd
Of my condition!
CORDELIA. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.
No, sir, you must not kneel.
LEAR. Pray, do not mock me.
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;

49. **when** $Q_2F_3F_4$ | where $Q_1F_1F_2$.
51-52. Four lines in Ff.
51. **a while** Q_1Ff | awhile Q_2.
53. **I am** | I 'm Pope.
58. **hands** Qq | hand Ff.
59. **No, sir** | Ff omit.

47. **that**: so that. Cf. *Macbeth*, I, ii, 58. See Abbott, § 283.

53. **abus'd**. The ordinary modern meaning would be suitable here, but 'deceived by appearances' is the better interpretation. In line 77, 'abuse' certainly means 'deceive,' 'misinform.' See note, IV, i, 22.

58. A parent's curse was of old regarded as a dreadful thing, and so Cordelia longs first of all to have her father revoke the curse he pronounced upon her in the opening of the play. She had not learned to act as if "a man were author of himself, and knew no other kin."

And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

CORDELIA. And so I am, I am.

LEAR. Be your tears wet? yes, faith. I pray, weep not.
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong;
You have some cause, they have not.

CORDELIA. No cause, no cause.

LEAR. Am I in France?

KENT. In your own kingdom, sir.

LEAR. Do not abuse me.

DOCTOR. Be comforted, good madam: the great rage,
You see, is kill'd in him; and yet 't is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more
Till further settling.

CORDELIA. Will 't please your highness walk?

79. **kill'd** Ff | cured Qq. 79-80. **and . . . lost** | Ff omit.

65. **mainly**: perfectly. Cf. the common use of 'mightily.'

80. **even o'er the time**: make the last day of his remembering tally or fit in with the present.

82. **walk**: withdraw, retire. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, II, iii, 218: "My lord will you walk? dinner is ready."

LEAR. You must bear with me.
Pray you now, forget and forgive; I am old and foolish.
[*Exeunt all but* KENT *and* GENTLEMAN]

GENTLEMAN. Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was so slain? 86

KENT. Most certain, sir.

GENTLEMAN. Who is conductor of his people?

KENT. As 't is said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

GENTLEMAN. They say Edgar, his banish'd son, is with the Earl of Kent in Germany. 91

KENT. Report is changeable. 'T is time to look about; the powers of the kingdom approach apace.

GENTLEMAN. The arbitrement is like to be bloody. Fare you well, sir. [*Exit*]

KENT. My point and period will be throughly wrought,
Or well or ill, as this day's battle 's fought. [*Exit*]

84. **Pray you** Ff | Pray Qq. — [*Exeunt . . .* | Exeunt Ff.

85-97. GENTLEMAN. **Holds . . . fought** [*Exit*] Qq | Ff omit.

84. "How beautifully the affecting return of Lear to reason, and the mild pathos of his speeches, prepare the mind for the last sad, yet sweet, consolation of the aged sufferer's death!" — Coleridge.

85–97. "Omitted in the Folio; no doubt, for the same reason that the end (98–106) of III, vii, was omitted, viz. that the Scene should close with a more obvious climax — in this case, the exit of Lear and Cordelia at line 84." — Verity. "Omitted by the author, I suppose, for no other reason than to shorten the representation." — Johnson. "It is much more probable that it was omitted by the players, after the author's departure from the stage, without consulting him." — Malone.

96. **point and period**: object and end. — **throughly**: thoroughly.

ACT V

SCENE I. *The British camp near Dover*

Enter, with drum and colours, EDMUND, REGAN, Gentlemen, *and* Soldiers

EDMUND. Know of the duke if his last purpose hold,
Or whether since he is advis'd by aught
To change the course. He 's full of alteration
And self-reproving. Bring his constant pleasure.
[*To a* Gentleman, *who goes out*]

REGAN. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

EDMUND. 'T is to be doubted, madam.

REGAN. Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you;
Tell me — but truly — but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister?

EDMUND. In honour'd love.

REGAN. But have you never found my brother's way
To the forfended place?

EDMUND. That thought abuses you.

The British . . . Dover Globe | Qq Ff omit. — *Enter* . . . Soldiers Ff | Enter Edmund, Regan and their powers Qq.

4. [*To . . . out*] Globe | QqFf omit.
9. In Ff | I Qq.
11-13. EDMUND. That thought . . . call hers | Ff omit.

4. constant pleasure: settled decision. Cf. constant will, I, i, 36.
5. miscarried: perished. So in line 44. Cf. *Henry V*, IV, i, 155.
6. doubted: feared. Cf. 'doubtful,' meaning 'afraid,' line 12.
11. forfended: forbidden. Cf. *Othello*, V, ii, 32.

REGAN. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.
EDMUND. No, by mine honour, madam.
REGAN. I never shall endure her. Dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.
EDMUND. Fear me not.
She and the duke her husband!

Enter, with drum and colours, ALBANY, GONERIL, *and* Soldiers

GONERIL. [*Aside*] I had rather lose the battle than that sister
Should loosen him and me.
ALBANY. Our very loving sister, well be-met.
Sir, this I hear: the king is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigour of our state
Forc'd to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant; for this business,
It toucheth us, as France invades our land,
Not bolds the king, with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.
EDMUND. Sir, you speak nobly.
REGAN. Why is this reason'd?

16. **me** Qq | Ff omit. 21. **hear** | heard Ff.
18, 19. Ff omit. — [*Aside*] Theobald. 23-28. **Where . . . nobly** | Ff omit.

13. **bosom'd with her**: in her confidence. Cf. IV, v, 26. — **as far as we call hers**: as far as she has any favors to bestow.

26. **bolds**: emboldens. Mason suggested 'the old' for 'bolds the.' Albany means that the invasion touches him, not as it is a befriending of the old king and aims to reinstate him in the throne, but as it threatens the independence of the kingdom.

28. **reason'd**: talked about. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, II, viii, 27.

GONERIL. Combine together 'gainst the enemy;
For these domestic and particular broils
Are not the question here.
ALBANY. Let 's then determine
With th' ancient of war on our proceeding.
EDMUND. I shall attend you presently at your tent.
REGAN. Sister, you 'll go with us?
GONERIL. No.
REGAN. 'T is most convenient; pray you, go with us.
GONERIL. [*Aside*] O, ho, I know the riddle! — I will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR *disguised*

EDGAR. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.
ALBANY. I 'll overtake you.
[*Exeunt all but* ALBANY *and* EDGAR]
Speak.
EDGAR. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it; wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion that will prove
What is avouched there. If you miscarry,

33. Ff omit.
36. **pray you** Qq | pray Ff.
37. [*Aside*] Capell.
38. *As they . . . disguised* Theobald | Exeunt both the Armies. Enter Edgar Ff. — Scene II Pope.
39. [*Exeunt . . .* | Q_2Ff omit.
42. **wretched** QqF1 | wretch F_2.

32. **th' ancient of war**: veterans, experienced soldiers.

34–37. Goneril lingers to be with Edmund, and this at once starts Regan's suspicions. When Regan urges Goneril to go along with them, the latter instantly guesses the cause — the 'riddle' — and replies, "I will go."

36. **convenient**: becoming, befitting.

44. **avouched**: asserted. — **miscarry**. See note, line 5.

Your business of the world hath so an end,
And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

ALBANY. Stay till I have read the letter.

EDGAR. I was forbid it.
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I 'll appear again.

ALBANY. Why, fare thee well; I will o'erlook thy paper.
[*Exit* EDGAR]

Re-enter EDMUND

EDMUND. The enemy 's in view; draw up your powers.
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
By diligent discovery; but your haste
Is now urg'd on you.

ALBANY. We will greet the time. [*Exit*]

EDMUND. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive. To take the widow
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive. Now then we 'll use
His countenance for the battle; which being done,
Let her who would be rid of him devise
His speedy taking-off. As for the mercy

46. **love** Qq | loues Ff. 55. Scene III Pope.

46. Evil designs against your life are at an end.
54. **greet the time**: meet the occasion, the emergency.
61. The metaphor is probably from card-playing.
65. **taking-off**: removal, death. Cf. *Macbeth*, I, vii, 20.

Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,
The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon; for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. [*Exit*]

SCENE II. *A field between the two camps*

Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours, LEAR, CORDELIA, *and* Soldiers, *over the stage; and exeunt*

Enter EDGAR *and* GLOUCESTER

EDGAR. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive.
If ever I return to you again,
I 'll bring you comfort.

GLOUCESTER. Grace go with you, sir! [*Exit* EDGAR]

Alarum and retreat within. Re-enter EDGAR

EDGAR. Away, old man; give me thy hand; away! 5
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en.
Give me thy hand; come on.

GLOUCESTER. No further, sir; a man may rot even here.

EDGAR. What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure

SCENE II | Scene IV Pope.—*A field . . . camps* Globe | QqFf omit.
1. **tree** Ff | bush Qq.
8. **further** Ff | farther Qq.

69. **Stands . . . defend**: it is incumbent on me to defend.

2. **host**: shelter, lodging. Cf. 'host' for 'lodge,' *All 's Well that Ends Well*, III, v, 97; *The Comedy of Errors*, I, ii, 9.

5. Spedding contended that Act V should begin here, basing his ingenious argument on the meagreness of the description of this battle. In his arrangement the battle would take place in the interval between Edgar's exit in the fourth act and re-entrance here.

Their going hence, even as their coming hither;
Ripeness is all. Come on.
GLOUCESTER. And that 's true too. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III. *The British camp, near Dover*

Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours, EDMUND; LEAR *and* CORDELIA, *as prisoners;* Captain, Soldiers, *&c.*

EDMUND. Some officers take them away; good guard,
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.
CORDELIA. We are not the first
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, I am cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?
LEAR. No, no, no, no! Come, let 's away to prison;
We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage.
When thou dost ask me blessing, I 'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness. So we 'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we 'll talk with them too,

11. GLOUCESTER. **And that 's true too** | Qq omit.
SCENE III | Scene V Pope. — *The British . . . Dover* Malone | Qq Ff omit.
2. **first** Ff | best Qq.

11. **Ripeness**: preparedness, readiness. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 234: "the readiness is all." Cf., too, the familiar expression, "like a shock of corn, fully ripe," adapted from *Job*, v, 26.

2. **their greater pleasures**: the pleasure of greater personages.

3. **censure**: pass sentence on. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, I, iv, 72.

Who loses and who wins; who 's in, who 's out;
And take upon 's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies: and we 'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by th' moon.

EDMUND. Take them away.

LEAR. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee?
He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;
The good-years shall devour them, flesh and fell,
Ere they shall make us weep; we 'll see 'em starv'd first.
Come. [*Exeunt* LEAR *and* CORDELIA *guarded*]

EDMUND. Come hither, captain; hark.
Take thou this note [*giving a paper*]; go follow them to prison.
One step I have advanc'd thee; if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes. Know thou this, that men

24. good-years | good yeares F1 | good Qq | good-jers Theobald | goujeres Hanmer.
25. starv'd Ff Furness | starue Qq Globe Camb.
26. [*Exeunt . . . guarded*] Theobald | Exit Ff.
28. [*giving a paper*] Malone.

15. The old king refers to the intrigues and rivalries, the plottings and counter-plottings, of courtiers to get ahead of each other in the sovereign's favor. The swift vicissitudes of 'ins' and 'outs' in court life was a common theme of talk in Shakespeare's day.

17. **God's spies**: "Spies commissioned and enabled by God to pry into the most hidden secrets." — Heath.

18. **packs and sects**: confederacies and parties.

23. Alluding to the old practice of smoking foxes out of their holes.

24. **good-years.** An expression that "came to be used in imprecatory phrases as denoting some undefined malefic power or agency." — Murray. — **fell**: skin.

Are as the time is; to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword: thy great employment
Will not bear question; either say thou 'lt do 't,
Or thrive by other means.

CAPTAIN. I 'll do 't, my lord.

EDMUND. About it; and write happy when thou 'st done.
Mark, — I say, instantly; and carry it so
As I have set it down.

CAPTAIN. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
If 't be man's work, I 'll do 't. [*Exit*]

Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, *another* Captain, *and* Soldiers

ALBANY. Sir, you have show'd to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well. You have the captives
Who were the opposites of this day's strife.
I do require them of you, so to use them
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

EDMUND. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention and appointed guard;

36. **thou 'st** | th' hast F_1F_2.
39-40. CAPTAIN. **I cannot . . . I 'll do 't** | Ff omit.
41. Scene VI Pope. — . . . *another* Captain *and* | Ff omit. — **show'd** | shew'd Ff | shewed Q_1 | shewne Q_2 | shown Capell.
43. **Who** Ff | That Qq.
44. **I** Ff | We Qq.
48. **and . . . guard** | Ff omit.

33–34. The work entrusted to thee admits of no discussion.

36. **write happy**: call yourself fortunate.

37. **carry it**: manage the matter. What this refers to appears afterwards in Edmund's last speech, lines 252–255.

41. **strain**: lineage, descent. Cf. *Cymbeline*, IV, ii, 24.

Whose age had charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side,
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent the queen;
My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, t' appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd
By those that feel their sharpness.
The question of Cordelia and her father
Requires a fitter place.

ALBANY. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

REGAN. That 's as we list to grace him.
Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded,
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers;
Bore the commission of my place and person;
The which immediacy may well stand up
And call itself your brother.

49. had Ff | has Qq. **55-60. At . . . place** | Ff omit.

50. To win the affection of the common people.

51. **impress'd lances**: the spears of those pressed into our service. Cf. Lear's reference to 'press-money,' IV, vi, 87.

57–58. In a war, even those of the victorious side, those who have the best of it, curse the quarrel at first, while they feel its sharpness in the loss of friends, or perhaps in their own wounds.

66. **immediacy**: immediate tenure of authority. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 109. This apt and forcible word is probably of Shakespeare's coinage. The next example of its use, according to Murray, is in a work dated 1658.

GONERIL. Not so hot;
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
More than in your addition.
REGAN. In my rights
By me invested, he compeers the best.
ALBANY. That were the most, if he should husband you.
REGAN. Jesters do oft prove prophets.
GONERIL. Holla, holla!
That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.
REGAN. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer
From a full flowing stomach. General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine;
Witness the world that I create thee here
My lord and master.
GONERIL. Mean you to enjoy him?
ALBANY. The let-alone lies not in your good-will.

69. **addition** Ff | aduancement Qq. 77. Qq omit. — **are** F_2 | is F_1.
71. ALBANY | Alb. Ff | Gon. Qq. 79. **him** Ff | him then Qq.

69. **your addition**: the title which you have bestowed.

71. Camb and many modern editors follow the Quartos and give this speech to Goneril.

73. "Love being jealous makes a good eye look a-squint." — Ray, *Proverbs*. Cf. Milton, *Comus*, 413: "banish squint suspicion."

75. **stomach**: anger, resentment. In the mediæval physiology the stomach was regarded as the special seat of anger.

77. **the walls are thine**. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, Lettsom's conjecture, "yea, all is thine," was adopted as the reading here. Clar thinks the expression may refer to Regan's castle (cf. line 245); Schmidt interprets it as a metaphor signifying complete surrender.

80. "Albany tells his wife that, however she might want the power, she evidently did not want the inclination, to prevent the match." — Ritson. A taunt equivalent to "You want him yourself."

EDMUND. Nor in thine, lord.

ALBANY. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

REGAN. [*To* EDMUND] Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

ALBANY. Stay yet, hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason; and, in thy arrest,
This gilded serpent [*pointing to* GONERIL]. For your claim, fair sister,
I bar it in the interest of my wife;
'T is she is sub-contracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your banns.
If you will marry, make your loves to me;
My lady is bespoke.

GONERIL. An interlude!

ALBANY. Thou art arm'd, Gloucester; let the trumpet sound.
If none appear to prove upon thy person
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge [*throwing down a glove*]. I 'll prove it on thy heart,
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

REGAN. Sick, O, sick!

GONERIL. [*Aside*] If not, I 'll ne'er trust medicine.

82. [*To* EDMUND] Malone.
84. **thy arrest** Ff | thine attaint Qq.
85. [*pointing to* GONERIL] Johnson. — **sister** Qq | Sisters Ff.
86. **bar** Rowe | bare QqFf.
91. **let . . . sound** | Qq omit.
92. **person** Ff | head Qq.
94. **prove it** Qq | make it F_1 | make it $F_2F_3F_4$.
94, 98. [*throwing . . . glove*] Malone.
97. [*Aside*] Rowe. — **medicine** Ff | poyson Qq.

84. **arrest**. The Quarto reading 'attaint' means 'impeachment.'

90. **An interlude!** Probably said sarcastically, as if Albany had arranged a comedy for the entertainment of the company.

EDMUND. There 's my exchange [*throwing down a glove*].
What in the world he is
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.
Call by the trumpet; he that dares approach,
On him, on you, — who not? — I will maintain
My truth and honour firmly.

ALBANY. A herald, ho!

EDMUND. A herald, ho, a herald!

ALBANY. Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

REGAN. My sickness grows upon me.

ALBANY. She is not well; convey her to my tent.
[*Exit* REGAN, *led*]

Enter a Herald

Come hither, herald, — Let the trumpet sound, —
And read out this.

CAPTAIN. Sound, trumpet! [*A trumpet sounds*]

HERALD. [*Reads*] If any man of quality or degree within the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund, suppos'd Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear by the third sound of the trumpet; he is bold in his defence.

EDMUND. Sound! [*First trumpet*]

HERALD. Again! [*Second trumpet*]

HERALD. Again! [*Third trumpet*]
[*Trumpet answers within*]

100. **the** Ff | thy Qq.
103. EDMUND. **A herald, ho, a herald** | Ff omit.
107. [*Exit* REGAN, *led*] Theobald.
108. Scene VII Pope. — **trumpet** | Trumper F1.
110. CAPTAIN. **Sound . . .** | Ff omit.
115. EDMUND. **Sound** | Ff omit.

104. **virtue**: valor. Lat. *virtus*. Cf. *Coriolanus*, I, i, 41.

Enter EDGAR, *at the third sound, armed, with a* Trumpet *before him*

ALBANY. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' th' trumpet.
HERALD. What are you?
Your name, your quality? and why you answer
This present summons?
EDGAR. Know, my name is lost,
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit;
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope.
ALBANY. Which is that adversary?
EDGAR. What 's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of Gloucester?
EDMUND. Himself; what say'st thou to him?
EDGAR. Draw thy sword,
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice; here is mine.
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
My oath, and my profession. I protest,

118. *Enter . . . him* Qq (substantially) | Enter Edgar armed Ff.
121-122. **lost, By** Theobald | lost By Ff.
129. **the . . . honours** Pope | the priuiledge of my tongue Qq | my priuiledge, The priuiledge of mine Honours Ff.

118. Trumpet *before him:* preceded by a trumpeter. The details here are in accordance with the old ceremonial of the trial by combat in criminal cases. So in Selden's *Duello:* "The appellant and his procurator first come to the gate. The constable and marshal demand by voice of herald, what he is, and why he comes so arrayed." The same ceremonial is followed in detail in *Richard II*, I, ii.

129–130. "Edgar refers to 'the right of bringing the charge' as the privilege of his profession as knight." — Gollancz.

Maugre thy strength, place, youth, and eminence,
Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,
Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor,
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father,
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince,
And, from th' extremest upward of thy head
To the descent and dust below thy foot,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'No,'
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

EDMUND. In wisdom I should ask thy name;
But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,
What safe and nicely I might well delay
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn.
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head;
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;
Which, for they yet glance by, and scarcely bruise,

131. **place, youth** Ff Furness | youth, place Qq Globe Camb.
132. **Despite** | Despight Qq | Despise Ff.
137. **below thy foot** Ff | beneath thy feet Qq.
143. **tongue** Ff | being Qq.—**some say** Qq | (some say) Ff.
144. Qq omit.
148. **scarcely** | scarely F1.

131. **Maugre**: in spite of. Old Fr. *maugré, malgré.* Cf. *Twelfth Night*, III, i, 163: "maugre all thy pride."

132. **fire-new**. Cf. 'brand-new,' 'fresh from the forge.'

141. Because, if his adversary were not of equal rank, Edmund might decline the combat.

143. **say**: taste, proof. An aphetic form of 'assay.'

144–145. **nicely**: punctiliously. The trial which I might well delay I disdain and scorn to delay.

147. **hell-hated**: hateful as hell. Cf. 'hell-black,' III, vii, 59.

This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak!
[*Alarums. They fight.* EDMUND *falls*]
ALBANY. Save him, save him!
GONERIL. This is practice, Gloucester;
By th' law of arms thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguil'd.
ALBANY. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it. Hold, sir;
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil.
No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it.
GONERIL. Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine.
Who can arraign me for 't? [*Exit*]
ALBANY. Most monstrous! Oh!—
Know'st thou this paper?
EDMUND. Ask me not what I know.
ALBANY. Go after her: she 's desperate; govern her.

150. [*Alarums . . . falls*] Capell | Alarums. Fights Ff (after **him**).
151. **practice** Ff | meere practise Qq | mere practice Steevens.
159. **can** Ff | shal Qq.—**Oh** | O Ff | Qq omit.
160. EDMUND | Bast. Ff | Gon. Qq.

150. **Where**: to the place where. Edgar's heart.

151. **Save him, save him!** Many editors give this speech to Goneril. Theobald conjectured that 'Alb.' of Quartos and Folios was a corruption from 'Amb.' or 'Lad.,' to signify *both* the women, or *Ladies*. — **practice**: foul play, treachery. Cf. I, ii, 161, etc.

160. Albany might well ask Edmund, "Know'st thou this paper?" for, in fact, Goneril's letter did not reach Edmund; he had not seen it. Edmund, with some spirit of manhood, refuses to make any answers that will criminate or blacken a woman by whom he is loved; and then proceeds, consistently, to answer *Edgar's* charges. Camb follows Quartos in giving "Ask me not what I know" to Goneril.

EDMUND. What you have charg'd me with, that have
I done;
And more, much more; the time will bring it out.
'T is past, and so am I. But what art thou
That hast this fortune on me? If thou 'rt noble,
I do forgive thee.
EDGAR. Let 's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
If more, the more thou 'st wronged me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us.
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.
EDMUND. Thou 'st spoken right, 't is true;
The wheel is come full circle; I am here.
ALBANY. Methought thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness. I must embrace thee;
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee or thy father!
EDGAR. Worthy prince,
I know 't.
ALBANY. Where have you hid yourself?
How have you known the miseries of your father?
EDGAR. By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;
And when 't is told, O that my heart would burst!
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near — O, our lives' sweetness!

162. Scene VIII Pope.
168, 173. thou 'st | th' hast Ff.
170. vices Ff | vertues Qq.
171. plague Ff | scourge Qq.

174. **wheel . . . circle.** Cf. Feste's words, *Twelfth Night*, V, i, 385.

That we the pain of death would hourly die,
Rather than die at once! — taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags; t' assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd; and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair;
Never — O fault! — reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd.
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him our pilgrimage; but his flaw'd heart, —
Alack, too weak the conflict to support! —
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.

EDMUND. This speech of yours hath mov'd me,
And shall perchance do good: but speak you on;
You look as you had something more to say.

ALBANY. If there be more, more woeful, hold it in;
For I am almost ready to dissolve,
Hearing of this.

EDGAR. This would have seem'd a period
To such as love not sorrow; but another,

185. **we . . . would** Ff | with . . . Would Qq | with . . . we'd Jennens. 204-221. EDGAR. **This would . . . for a slave** | Ff omit.

194–195. **success**: result. "This good success" refers to the combat with Edmund. Edgar, apprehensive that he might fall, had piously craved his father's benediction on the undertaking. So, in the long run, he who believes in the gods, and fears them, proves too much for the intellectual sceptic and scoffer.

205–207. "One more such circumstance only, by amplifying what is already too much, would add to it, and so exceed what seemed

To amplify too much, would make much more,
And top extremity.
Whilst I was big in clamour, came there a man,
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding
Who 't was that so endur'd, with his strong arms
He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
As he 'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him
That ever ear receiv'd; which in recounting
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
Began to crack. Twice then the trumpets sounded,
And there I left him tranc'd.

ALBANY. But who was this?

EDGAR. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise
Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
Improper for a slave.

Enter a GENTLEMAN, *with a bloody knife*

GENTLEMAN. Help, help, O, help!

EDGAR. What kind of help?

ALBANY. Speak, man!

EDGAR. What means that bloody knife?

GENTLEMAN. 'T is hot, it smokes!
It came even from the heart of — O, she 's dead!

206. **too much** | too-much Capell.
213. **him** Theobald | me Qq.
222. Scene IX Pope.— *with a bloody knife* | Ff omit.
222-223. EDGAR. **What . . . knife** Ff | *Alb.* What kinde of helpe, what meanes that bloudy knife Qq.
223, 224. Prose in Ff.

to be the limit of sorrow." — Clar. "To amplify" is a gerundial (indefinite) infinitive.

220. **enemy king.** Cf. 'enemy town,' *Coriolanus*, IV, iv, 24.

ALBANY. Who dead? speak, man! 225

GENTLEMAN. Your lady, sir, your lady! and her sister
By her is poison'd; she confesses it.

EDMUND. I was contracted to them both; all three
Now marry in an instant.

EDGAR. Here comes Kent.

ALBANY. Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead. 230

[*Exit* GENTLEMAN]

This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity.

Enter KENT

O, is this he?
The time will not allow the compliment
Which very manners urges.

KENT. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night. 235
Is he not here?

ALBANY. Great thing of us forgot!
Speak, Edmund, where 's the king? and where 's Cordelia?
See'st thou this object, Kent?

[*The bodies of* GONERIL *and* REGAN *are brought in*]

KENT. Alack, why thus?

EDMUND. Yet Edmund was belov'd.

227. confesses Ff | hath confest Q_1.
230. [*Exit* . . . | QqFf omit.
232. *Enter* KENT | in Ff (after Kent, line 229). — O . . . he? F_1 | ALB. O tis he, Qq | O is this she? $F_2F_3F_4$ Rowe Pope | ALB. O! it is he. Steevens.
238. [*The bodies . . . in*] Qq | Gonerill and Regans bodies brought out Ff (after line 230).

233–234. There is no time now for the interchange of courtesies which mere good breeding requires, to say nothing of old friendship and affection. 'Manners' is singular in meaning here. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, V, iii, 214.

The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.

ALBANY. Even so. Cover their faces.

EDMUND. I pant for life; some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,
Be brief in it, to th' castle! for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia.
Nay, send in time.

ALBANY. Run, run, O, run!

EDGAR. To who, my lord? Who has the office? send
Thy token of reprieve.

EDMUND. Well thought on. Take my sword;
Give it the captain.

ALBANY. Haste thee, for thy life. [*Exit* EDGAR]

EDMUND. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself.

ALBANY. The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.
[EDMUND *is borne off*]

Re-enter LEAR, *with* CORDELIA *dead in his arms;* EDGAR, Captain, *and others following*

LEAR. Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones!
Had I your tongues and eyes, I 'd use them so

248. **who** QqF1 | whom F2F3F4. — **has** Ff | hath Qq.
251. ALBANY | Alb. Q2 | Duke Q1 | Edg. Ff. — [*Exit* EDGAR] Malone.
256. **awhile** F1 | a while QqF2F3F4. — [EDMUND . . . *off*] Theobald.
257. Scene X Pope. — *Re-enter . . . following* | Enter (Entor F1) Lear with Cordelia in his armes (arms F4) QqFf. — **Howl . . . howl** Qq | Howl, howl, howl Ff. — **you** QqF3F4 | your F1F2. — **stones** | stone Pope.

255. **fordid**: destroyed. Cf. *Hamlet*, II, i, 103; V, i, 244.

That heaven's vault should crack. She 's gone for ever!
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She 's dead as earth! Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

KENT. Is this the promis'd end?

EDGAR. Or image of that horror?

ALBANY. Fall and cease!

LEAR. This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

KENT. [*Kneeling*] O my good master!

LEAR. Prithee, away!

EDGAR. 'T is noble Kent, your friend.

LEAR. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have sav'd her; now she 's gone for ever!
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!
What is 't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

267. [*Kneeling*] Theobald. 273. **woman** Ff | women Qq.

262. **stone**: mirror of polished stone or crystal. Some think the word a compositor's mistake through confusion with 'stones,' line 257.

263–264. **the promis'd end**: the end of the world. With 'image of that horror,' cf. *Macbeth*, II, iii, 83.

264. **Fall and cease.** Many interpretations of this exclamation have been offered. "Fall, heaven! and let things cease!" — Capell. But probably the words refer to Lear. Albany, looking on the pains employed by Lear to recover Cordelia, and knowing to what miseries he must survive, when he finds them to be ineffectual, may well exclaim, "Rather fall, and cease to be at once, than continue in existence only to be wretched."

CAPTAIN. 'T is true, my lords, he did.
LEAR. Did I not, fellow? 275
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion
I would have made them skip. I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?
Mine eyes are none o' th' best; I 'll tell you straight.
KENT. If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated, 280
One of them we behold.
LEAR. This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?
KENT. The same.
Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius?
LEAR. He 's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
He 'll strike, and quickly too. He 's dead and rotten. 285
KENT. No, my good lord, I am the very man —
LEAR. I 'll see that straight.
KENT. That, from the first of difference and decay,
Have follow'd your sad steps —
LEAR. You 're welcome hither.
KENT. Nor no man else. All 's cheerless, dark, and deadly.
Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves, 291
And desperately are dead.
LEAR. Ay, so I think.

275. CAPTAIN | Cap. Qq | Gent. Ff. — **sight** Ff | light Jennens.
277. **them** Qq | him Ff. 289. **You 're** Pope | You 'r Q1 | Your are F1. — **hither** | hether Q2.
282. **This . . . sight** Ff | Qq omit.

280–281. "If Fortune . . . should brag of two persons, one of whom she had highly elevated, and the other she had woefully depressed, we now behold the latter." — Mason. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare 'ye' was read for 'we,' and 'one' was interpreted as Kent himself.

282. **This is a dull sight**: it is growing dark.

288. **first of difference**: beginning of change in your fortunes.

ALBANY. He knows not what he says; and vain is it
That we present us to him.
EDGAR. Very bootless.

Enter a Captain

CAPTAIN. Edmund is dead, my lord.
ALBANY. That 's but a trifle here.
You lords and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay may come
Shall be applied: for us, we will resign,
During the life of this old majesty,
To him our absolute power. [*To* EDGAR *and* KENT] You, to your rights,
With boot, and such addition as your honours
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings. O, see, see!
LEAR. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!

293. **says** | saies F_1 | sayes $F_2F_3F_4$ | sees Qq.
295. *Enter a* Captain | Enter Captaine Qq | Enter a Messenger Ff. — CAPTAIN | Mess. Ff.
297. **great** | Qq omit.
300. [*To* . . . KENT] Malone.
305. **No, no, no** Ff | no, no Qq.

297. **great decay.** Either (1) Lear himself (Gloucester has already called him (IV, vi, 117) "ruin'd piece of nature"); or (2) "the collective misfortunes which this scene reveals" (Delius).

301. **boot**: what is thrown in at a bargain. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, v, 40. The expression is still used in dialect.

305. **poor fool.** As this was a not uncommon term of pity or endearment (cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, II, i, 326), most editors interpret it as referring to Cordelia. Sir Joshua Reynolds held that Lear refers to the Fool. "May it not refer to both? Through death the old king may be stumbling into the truth of the indissoluble union that love welds. The 'poor fool' may well be Cordelia, but how natural that the expression should also involve him whose pining

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou 'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!
Pray you, undo this button. Thank you, sir.
Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
Look there, look there! [*Dies*]

EDGAR. He faints! My lord, my lord!

KENT. Break, heart; I prithee, break!

EDGAR. Look up, my lord.

KENT. Vex not his ghost. O, let him pass! he hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

EDGAR. He is gone indeed.

KENT. The wonder is he hath endur'd so long;
He but usurp'd his life.

ALBANY. Bear them from hence. Our present business
Is general woe. [*To* KENT *and* EDGAR] Friends of my soul, you twain
Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain.

308. **Never** | five times in Ff; three times in Qq; six times in Keightley.
309-311. **sir. Do . . . there** | sir, O, o, o, o, o Q2 | sir, O, o, o, o Q1.
310. **her, look, her lips** Johnson | her? Looke her lips F1.
312. KENT Ff | Lear Qq.
314. **rack** F4 | wracke QqF1F2.
319. [*To* . . . EDGAR] Johnson.

away after Cordelia's going into France the old king had noted well. As he says these words there comes on Lear's whitening face a glory like an afterglow, and in this mysterious afterglow there lingers all the pathos of the play. The pathos of the play has been its only light, for all its love is pity; and this light last touches here the life it first struck, while we feel as if, out beyond the gathering night, it were vibrating in the long-since pining for Cordelia gone, as star to star." — E. C. B.

309. A poignant dramatic touch expressing the suffocation of the death grip. Cf. Browning, *Prospice*, 1: "the fog in my throat."

KENT. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;
My master calls me, I must not say no.

EDGAR. The weight of this sad time we must obey;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most: we that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

[*Exeunt, with a dead march*]

322. [Dyes] F_2 | [Dies] F_3F_4.
323. EDGAR | Edg. Ff Rowe De- lius Furness | Duke Qq | Alb. Pope Globe Camb.

321. The metaphor implicit here occurs more than once in Shakespeare. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, i, 78–80:

> something after death,
> The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
> No traveller returns.

So also in *Cymbeline*, V, iv, 190: "how you shall speed in your journey's end, I think you 'll never return to tell one." In Marlowe, *Edward the Second*, V, vi, 65–66, Mortimer, about to be executed, says:

> weep not for Mortimer,
> That scorns the world, and as a traveller
> Goes to discover countries yet unknown.

322. **My master**: Lear. Cf. the determination of Dougal, the Laird of Redgauntlet's butler (Scott, *Redgauntlet*, "Wandering Willie's Tale"), to follow the call of his dead master.

323–326. Many modern editors follow the Quartos and give this to Albany, usually on the ground that in Shakespeare's other great tragedies the last speech is uttered by the man of highest rank surviving. The Folio assignment of the speech to Edgar is dramatically correct. "We that are young" comes naturally from Edgar, and it is peculiarly fitting that, as the calm, judicious, prudent counsellor, he should reply to the speech of Albany and utter a closing word of excuse and warning.

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